THE

LABOUR MONTHLY

A MAGAZINE OF INTERNATIONAL LABOUR

Editor : R. PALME DUTT

Volume 17 August, 1935 Number 8

Twenty-one Years After

WILLIAM RUST

A Trade Union Discussion

I. Contributions from Trade Unionists, in Mining, the Post Office, Distribution, Woodworking, Railways, Upholstery, Clerical Services and Agriculture

II. A Preliminary Survey

J. A. MAHON

West Africa and the Sedition Ordinances

S. R. WOOD

The Fourteenth of July in France

A Documentation

The 40th Anniversary of Engels' Death

Frederick Engels

V. I. LENIN

Engels and Science

J. D. BERNAL

The Housing Question (A review)

E. REGAN

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LABOUR MONTHLY
CONFERENCE
on
Trade Union Problems and Policy
BERMONDSEY TOWN HALL, SPA ROAD, S.E. 16

(Trams, 36, 38, 68 ; Buses, 1, 4, 42, 78.)

This Important Delegate Conference will be held on

Saturday, Aug. 24, at 3 p.m., and Sunday, Aug. 25, at 10 a.m.

(*The Labour Monthly will endeavour to provide hospitality for provincial Delegates.*)

Chairman : **Councillor R. G. L. BOWYER, Romford**

Openers of the Discussion : **W. PAYNE** Secretary, Dalston (Bus) Branch, Transport and General Workers' Union.

A. HORNER, Miners' Agent, South Wales Miners' Federation

This Conference has been organised in response to many requests for an opportunity to continue the discussion which has now been proceeding for several months in the columns of the LABOUR MONTHLY, and a preliminary survey of which is given elsewhere in this number. It is intended that the Conference shall provide a forum for the free and open discussion of all trade union problems and policy.

The issues to be raised at this Conference on which it is vital that all trade unionists should have a policy include :—

- The Movement for wage increases and the need for uniting the unions for common action.
- The attitude of the unions to rationalisation, particularly speed-up systems, the closing down of enterprises, and mass dismissals.
- The defence and enlargement of trade union democracy.
- The rôle of workshop organisation in the building up of trade unions and in defence of factory conditions.
- The attitude of the unions to Fascism and War, and ways and means of building international trade union unity.

Invitations have now gone out to Secretaries of all branches, district committees, national executives, shop stewards and works committees of every trade union in the South Midlands and Home Counties area of England, and of trades councils, whose addresses the LABOUR MONTHLY has been able to obtain.

All readers are particularly requested to see that the matter is raised in their organisation and a strong delegation appointed.

The LABOUR MONTHLY would welcome any suggestions for additions to the agenda or statements from organisations giving their attitude on any of the subjects to be discussed.

If your organisation has not yet received an invitation please apply immediately for one to be sent.

The Delegation fee is 1s., and any number of delegates can be sent.

Communications should be addressed to the Editorial Board, The LABOUR MONTHLY, 7 John Street, Theobalds Road, W.C.1.

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¶ The Editor of *The Labour Monthly* invites contributions. He cannot, however, be held responsible for MSS. sent to him or undertake to enter into correspondence regarding rejected contributions, although every endeavour will be made to return the same when a stamped and addressed envelope for that purpose is enclosed.

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The Labour Monthly Fund

OWING to a splendid donation from one individual reader, together with a fine number of smaller donations the total of the Debt Fund this month shows a very welcome increase over that of July. This month we can indeed say we have more than held our own.

We would appeal once again to all our supporters to maintain this figure especially during the summer months which, as we pointed out last month, are lean ones for all periodical publications.

The support the LABOUR MONTHLY receives as shown by the Conferences that have been held under its auspices together with a still rising circulation indicate that every such effort of our readers is being richly rewarded. For an increasing number are now coming into touch with the LABOUR MONTHLY and, as the correspondence, which reaches this office continually proves, are thus able to take part ever more effectively than before in the revolutionary movement.

So fill in one of the forms to be found overleaf, and thus take part in the job of maintaining the MONTHLY.

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TWENTY-ONE YEARS AFTER*

By WILLIAM RUST

THE armed peace is now swiftly passing over to open war. This is the situation twenty-one years after the outbreak of the war to end all wars, when the capitalist governments are putting the finishing touches to their preparations for the coming slaughter. In the name of security armaments have reached a new staggering total, in the name of security imperialist wars of plunder are already being waged and now a new colossal security hoax is being perpetrated, the militarisation of the civilian population, the putting of the entire nation on a war footing even before the war breaks out.

For this is the real meaning of the Government's "precautionary plans for the protection of the civil population against air raids." The publication of these plans is a startling revelation of the nearness of the war, they are being hurried through precisely because the National Government knows full well as to where its policy is leading. The "precautionary plans" are part of the preparations for war; they have little or nothing to do with defence. Even the carefully worded Home Office circular on the plans (written more in the style of a political manifesto in reply to the mass opposition to the Government's policy) has to admit that:

> It is impossible to guarantee immunity from attack. . . . The Government cannot undertake to provide money for the construction of public bomb-proof shelters which it considers impracticable and costly.

These admissions were of course made for a purpose. To deny undeniable facts is not always advisable. Far better to admit the real meaning of war in the air in order to carry off the pose of a realistic government determined to do at least something to defend the people. But the Government is admitting far too much; it has over-reached itself and achieved nothing but self-exposure.

For if there is no guarantee of immunity from attack, if it is absolutely certain that we are bound to be bombed and gassed despite blackouts and other elementary dodges, and if bomb-proof (and gas-proof) shelters are to be the privilege of the rich, what then is the meaning of the vast and elaborate machinery now being rapidly improvised throughout the country? Why have the local authorities been instructed to turn themselves into part of the machinery of war? Why have a horde of Army

*R.P.D. will resume his Notes of the Month in the October Issue.

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officers been let loose in the localities with powers to organise committees and unofficially to supervise the local government bodies ?

The introduction of the anti-gas measures has been done in the form of a gigantic piece of propaganda with the object of stampeding the people, of playing on their fears, of creating a feeling of panic so that they will passively submit to the instructions of the military and feel duly thankful to the National Government. The first steps have been taken in getting everybody into the gas mask goose step, of numbering and regimenting the civilians and bringing the local authorities under the control of the military. Other steps will rapidly follow.

We will not stop to argue about the extremely doubtful value of gas masks. The interested reader will find a wealth of information regarding the terrible new gases and the ineffectiveness of the most expensive gas masks (costing £20 and over) against them in two remarkable pamphlets, "Behind the Gas Mask"* and "Poison Gas."† In any case the Government itself has already admitted that its defence measures cannot keep out the bomber and that it has no intention of providing bomb and gas-proof shelters. Whether gas masks are good or bad, a new war means the destruction of large towns, the killing of millions of men, women and children. Those who escape one raid by means of defence measures will be kept alive as targets for the next.

Not Technical but Political.

The problem of defence, of war or peace is not a technical but a political question. The only real defence is a policy of peace, a policy of struggle against capitalism as the system which generates war. What is the *policy* behind the Government's proposals for technical defence ? Nothing other than the weaving still tighter of the threads of the Great Delusion, that increased armaments are a means of defence and of preserving peace. Before 1914 millions believed that the bigger the Navy the less the chance of war breaking out. Despite the war this cruel deception is still being fostered but with this difference : *the Government which calls for increased armaments in order to prevent war is simultaneously preaching the inevitability of war, it is declaring that the big issue facing the people of this country is not the fight against war, but the taking of measures in order to effect some reduction in the number of casualties when the war comes.*

This is the new Great Delusion which the entire working-class movement and all opponents of war must fight and explode. And it is a delusion precisely because the inevitability of war arises not from natural causes or the inherent wickedness of man, but from the policy of the Government itself. Mass resistance to that policy and a determined fight for the

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ending of the Government can play a decisive part in checking the advance to war and maintaining peace.

R.P.D. in his Notes of the Month has analysed this war-making policy of the Government stage by stage, and if we return again to this subject it is not only because of the urgency of the new events and the possibility of the war of Italian Fascism against Abyssinia beginning this very month, but above all because the many leaders of the Labour Party are now attempting to secure working-class acquiescence in the whole paraphernalia of gas-mask drills, blackouts, defence classes, etc.

Herbert Morrison has spoken: "We must co-operate." And all Labour men on local authorities are expected to fall into line. The Opposition accepts the instructions of the Government, it is the job of the Labour councillors and the local Labour Parties to form a united front with the Tories, Liberals and Army Officers in the dragooning of the civilian population in preparation for the next war. This is the logical sequel to the degrading Jubilee ramp. The veiled co-operation with the National Government through the jingoistic display has now developed into an open acceptance of its orders. Morrison's words mean that the leaders of the Labour Party have renounced the fight against war; they have accepted the Government's dictum that the only question at issue is how to make a certain reduction in the number of casualties when the war comes.

The Situation can be Saved.

But it is not too late for the situation to be saved. It can be saved by the rank and file of the labour movement, and by that influential body of opinion represented by the labour councillors who are now being put to a direct test and in many cases are already giving a working-class answer. "We say that we must all act together to stop war, to protect our women and children not with these 'precautionary measures,' which are not defensive at all, but by preventing the war breaking out." These words of Councillor John Young, at the Lancashire Conference of the LABOUR MONTHLY last month (a detailed report of which see elsewhere in this issue), will find a ready echo throughout the country.

The situation can be saved if the working-class movement is aroused for action against the National Government, and if a great united front drive is now made against its foreign policy which is leading directly to war.

The danger spot at this moment is Abyssinia. If Mussolini begins war the consequences may be even more terrible than those that followed the revolver shot at Sarajevo twenty-one years ago. The issues at stake are not only the satisfying of Italy's robber desire for colonial expansion. They are much larger. The relations of all European states are trembling

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in the balance, and this instability may result in a new collapse of the League of Nations. Not that the League even to-day plays a very significant rôle in the fight for peace ; its collapse would rather be an expression of the growing strength of the war interests than the breakdown of a peace instrument. But if Italy makes war on Abyssinia, a fellow member of the League, it will line itself up with the powers already outside the League and standing openly for war, Germany and Japan ; it will create the possibility of a new war bloc having a certain political and geographical unity.

The desirability of a German-Japanese alliance with the aim of a simultaneous offensive against the Eastern and Western frontiers of the Soviet Union has already been noisily advocated in the imperialist press of Berlin and Tokyo. Fascist Italy, engaged in a desperate war of colonial conquest, would not hesitate about coming to an understanding with Germany even at the price of concessions in Europe. On the basis of improved relations with Italy and with the possibility of getting Austria within its grasp, Hitler-Germany, torn by economic crisis and greedy for more territory, would press forward with its proclaimed aim of war on the Soviet Union with even greater arrogance and aggression.

The possibility of such a lightning change in the European situation is not a remote speculation. The changes of the last few months are already considerable and are leading in this direction. Only a short time ago the Stresa front of Britain, France and Italy, in condemnation of German conscription and for the upholding of the principles of the League of Nations, appeared on the surface a solid enough barrier against the immediate outbreak of war, especially as the line of the Stresa conference was solemnly endorsed by the League of Nations in an almost unanimous vote.

But the Stresa front is no more. Who broke it ? Not only Italy, the primary responsibility lies at the door of the most powerful partner—Great Britain. Fresh from its hypocritical condemnation of Germany's introduction of conscription as a violation of the Versailles Treaty the National Government immediately proceeded to violate the Treaty itself by negotiating the now famous naval agreement providing for the re-birth of the German Fleet. The navy scuttled by the Germans at Scapa Flow has now been resurrected by the British Imperialists themselves.

This completion of the rearmament of Germany, this breach of faith with France and deliberate destruction of the Stresa front by the National Government makes that new danger point in the war situation resulting in the growth of German aggressiveness and Mussolini's open defiance of the League. The National Government's "precautionary plans" at home are a direct counterpart of these war plans abroad.

The indignation of the French Government against the naval treaty was expressed very pointedly :

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> The complaint is of the method. France was not only not consulted. She was misled. On June 7 the British Government informed the French Government that the talks were exploratory only. The next communication to Paris reported the accomplished fact. (*Observer*, June 23.)
>
> It may be concluded that Mr. Eden did not succeed in shaking the French conviction that the British action fulfilled neither in spirit nor in letter the principle of a " united front " previously agreed on. (*Times*, June 22.)

After the Breakdown of Stresa.

The results of the breaking of the Stresa front by Britain are obvious. Germany, strengthened by the naval treaty and the Prince's " hand of friendship " has become more adamant than ever in its opposition to the Eastern Pact and the Franco-Soviet Pact of mutual assistance. Italy has immediately seized the opportunity in order to announce its intention of conquering Abyssinia at all costs and in defiance of the League. France double-crossed by Britain and fearful of Germany's growing strength has played up to Mussolini and his Abyssinian war with the object of avoiding isolation.

Now that its card of German naval rearmament has been played the Government again reverts to soft cooing about the necessity for peace and co-operation. The new Foreign Secretary, Sir Samuel Hoare, in his House of Commons speech on July 11 spoke glibly about the need for " collective security " and the importance of recognising the " indivisibility of peace." He even chided Hitler for being so dilatory in concluding an Eastern Pact and a Danubian Pact of non-aggression and non-interference.

It may well be that even the Government is a little dismayed at its own handiwork and that it does not relish an estrangement with France and the menace to British colonial interests which the conquest of Abyssinia by Italy would mean. The desires of the statesmen and events themselves are often two different things, and there is always the lurking fear amongst the British bourgeoisie that a rearmed Germany may fire its guns westward instead of eastward. But the speech of Hoare would appear to be more of a transparent manœuvre than a zig-zag in policy, especially as the pro-French section (Austen Chamberlain, etc.), of the Conservative Party seem now to exercise even less influence than usual.

But it is a manœuvre which should deceive no one. Like the attempts to prove that the naval agreement was a move to check German expansion, it puts too much trust in the political innocence of the masses. The official news that Germany is laying down two 26,000 ton battleships with the prospect of another monster of 35,000 and two cruisers of 10,000 tons each means that despite the limitation of total tonnage other countries will join in the competitive building of powerful offensive units. " The

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consequence, we fear, will be a fresh impetus to French building," writes the *News-Chronicle*. " Italy will doubtless follow suit ; so, we may be sure, will our own Admiralty." (July 10, 1935.)

The cooings of a Hoare cannot conceal the National Government's consistent preparation for war at home and abroad. The rearmament of Germany by Britain, completed through a series of stages including war credits, supplies of war materials and the signing of the naval treaty, has transformed the situation on the Continent and brought about a war situation starting in Abyssinia, but threatening to engulf Europe. At home the Government has utilised the armed Germany of its own creation in order to justify its immense increase in armaments and schemes for putting the entire nation on a war footing. And in this connection it is not without interest, to note that Simon in the Home Office is charged with important technical preparations for the war which, in the Foreign Office, he helped to foment. A new office but the same job.

Hoodwinking the Workers.

If this policy of the National Government is not yet clear to the masses then the reason is not far to seek : the official Opposition has been co-operating all along the line with the Government in hoodwinking the workers and pretending that the rearmament of Germany was a step towards equality and peace. On June 19 the *Daily Herald* greeted the naval pact as " a quite real contribution both to armament-limitation and to general pacification." Not even the Tory press dared indulge in such an extravagant glorification of rearmament ; in fact, the Rome correspondent of the *Times* was at that very moment declaring, " It is regarded as axiomatic that France will now be compelled to increase her fleet. In that event it is held to be almost certain that Italy, too, will be compelled to increase her fleet." (June 20th.)

This united front of the Labour Party has extended throughout the whole sphere of foreign policy. The break-up of the Stresa front by Britain was explicitly endorsed by the *Daily Herald* and the ineffable Ewer even wrote that " ' Mutual Assistance ' and ' Regional Pacts ' are pretty phrases to cover the ugly realities of old fashioned alliances." (July 10, 1935.)

This language gives the key to the policy of the Labour Party. In the name of collective security it has denounced the proposal of the Eastern Pact, attacked the peace policy of the Soviet Union, and condemned the Franco-Soviet Pact of Mutual Assistance. And all in the name of preserving the Covenant of the League of Nations ! The paltriness of the argument is clear. Germany, the chief instigator of war in Europe, is outside the League. Therefore the necessity of a collective security system based on pacts of mutual assistance and a determined

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drive to compel Fascist Germany to adhere to such pacts which can play a certain part in impeding the outbreak of war. The weakness of the pacts is the persistent refusal of Germany, counting on British backing, to support them. To-day the League of Nations is more impotent than ever because of this joint policy of the National Government and the Labour Party ; the rearming of Germany in defiance of the League, the ignoring of the Stresa decisions, the lengths to which Mussolini has been allowed to go in his war preparations against Abyssinia.

In practice the Labour Party has followed the line of British Imperialism, and the piteous pleas for the League have only been a method of dressing up that detestable policy in a presentable form. This is a policy which leads directly to war as its advocates know full well. The support given by the Labour Party to the Government's " precautionary plans," the acceptance of the view that war is inevitable, and that the issue is not fight against war but preparation for " defence " all follows naturally from the Labour Party's unity with the foreign policy of British Imperialism.

The working class will not submit passively to this policy, and the rumble of the coming revolt is already to be heard. Opposition to the blackout, etc., is growing and the demand for working-class action against war is being voiced incessantly in the trade unions, and is also expressed in the resolutions from local organisations on the agenda of the Labour Party Conference. The Socialist League has raised the demand for a special all-in working-class conference in order to consider the fight against war.

To-day the imperative need is to rally the masses against the war policy and for a peace policy, to demonstrate that the threatening war is not inevitable but can be staved off by a determined fight against the National Government and by forcing the demands of the united front on the Labour Party and trade union leaders.

For Peace, Against War.

Against the war policy of the National Government must be raised the alternative policy of peace. But this means a heavy fight against the dominant leaders of the Labour movement who, fearing that the mass movement against war will inevitably mean the strengthening of the united front and the sharpening of the class struggle, are moving more and more in the direction of coalition, the formation of a " real " National Government. The *Daily Herald* even goes out of its way to assure Baldwin " that what we all share as democrats is more than that which divides us as Party men." (July 5, 1935.)

The lines of this fight are already clear. The policy of co-operation with the National Government must be ended whether it concerns the

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field of foreign affairs or participation in the technical side of militarisation at home. No more rearmament of Germany and no more " precautionary plans." The present empty words about collective security which have only served to justify the rearmament of Germany on the grounds of " equality " must be replaced by a determined struggle for a collective security which recognises that Germany's path to war must be blocked in the way indicated by the Franco-Soviet Pact of Mutual Assistance which pledges both countries to act together in the event of aggression by Germany against one or the other. This pact is the key stone of a real system of collective security. The urgent need to-day is to force British imperialism to adhere to this peace pact, to compel a reversal of the line of encouraging German military aggression and to secure the conclusion of an Eastern Pact of Mutual Assistance which will hold in German Fascism on all sides.

There can of course be no delusion that these pacts would be a guarantee against war, and it would indeed be a cruel deception to foster such a belief. War will come in spite of the pacts unless the people are ready to act, unless the working class is ready for the general strike and conscious enough to carry the struggle forward to the overthrow of capitalism. But the pacts can stave off the war temporarily, and they can be made a tangible expression of the people's determination to fight against war, just as the Franco-Soviet Pact has become not only the embodiment of the immediate interests of French Imperialism, but above all the weapon of the French masses who feel that the pact, which was won by the united front and which has brought them into closer brotherly relations with the peaceful peoples of the Soviet Union, is their own achievement and sure shield.

The fight for a peace policy and for the ending of the National Government are inseparably bound up with the building of the workers' united front. This is the only solid base, as France shows, for winning over the petty bourgeoisie for a consistent fight for peace, it is the only weapon strong enough to force a peace policy on a capitalist government. In the present steps now being taken to widen the peace front in Britain it would be fatal to neglect this or in any way to overlook the importance of the independent working-class fight against war and the necessity for the propagation of a clear revolutionary tactic aiming at the overthrow of capitalism which, despite the resistance of the masses, is to-day incessantly driving towards a new world war.

HOSPITALITY.—All readers in the London area, able to put up Provincial Delegates to the Trade Union Conference (Aug. 24-25), are urged **AT ONCE** to inform *The Labour Monthly, 7 John Street, W.C. 1*

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A Discussion on Trade Union Problems and Policy—V.[3]

A. Contributions.

BELOW is printed a final selection of contributions to the discussion, commenced in the April issue, on Trade Union Problems and Policy. To guide the discussion the following series of six questions were drawn up. This selection will conclude this discussion at any rate in its present form. All trade union readers are urged to see that their organisation is strongly represented at the open conference on **August 24 and 25** (see advertisement on inside cover), and to discuss the summing up of the discussion, which will be found at the end of this final selection.

1. At the present time many Trade Unions are presenting demands for increased wages, and at the Trades Union Congress last September the Chairman, Mr. A. Conley, spoke of the need for co-ordination of the Trade Union forces. Do you believe such co-ordination is necessary? If so, what in your opinion are the first steps which should be taken towards that objective?
2. What in your opinion should be the line of trade union policy in the present economic situation? What should be the demands of the active workers in the Trade Unions? Where a demand has been tabled for an advance in wages, what in your opinion are the steps which should be taken within the factories and the Unions in order to achieve that demand?
3. What is your opinion of the circular of the Trades Union Congress General Council (on "disruptive movements"), proposing the revision of trade union constitutions with a view to excluding militant trade unionists from election to delegate or official positions? How will it effect trade union democracy and the building up of the Unions?
4. What in your opinion should be the attitude of the Unions to such schemes of rationalisation as are being suggested for a number of industries, *i.e.*, the Cotton Control Board, compulsory amalgamation in mining, etc.?
5. What concrete steps do you think it is possible for the Trade Unions to take in order to prevent the development of Fascism in this country?
6. What in your opinion should be the attitude of the Unions (a) as economic organs and (b) as affiliated bodies to the Labour Party towards the proposals for the formation of a United Front against

[3] A list of previous contributions is given at the end of this instalment.

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Fascism and War which the Communist Party and the I.L.P. have made to the Labour Party, in view of the decision of the Labour and Socialist International to allow its affiliated sections freedom of action in this respect ?

It should be noted that the answers are individual answers and do not necessarily commit the organisation or part of the organisation of which the contributors are officers or members.

From a Durham Lodge Chairman

In the present period, when economic strikes in the most important industries are taking place, and when such struggles are more and more assuming a political character, the co-ordination of the trade union forces is a vital necessity. Faced with a growing offensive against their conditions the workers should realise that the biggest defeats inflicted upon them in the past have been made possible owing to the greater rallying powers and superior organisation of the employers, and also to the absence of a United Front and the disunity of the workers, through the anti-Labour tactics of past and present leaders, *e.g.*, the General Strike. A strike is an economic war between two classes, and to ensure victory the workers require the utmost straining of all their forces and the co-ordination of all trade union organs to direct strikes on a united basis. The steps necessary to bring about such co-ordination are the mobilisation of all workers around a common programme of demands. These demands can be formulated by the convening of conferences of Branch delegates by each respective union. At these union conferences representatives to an all-in conference, consisting of all unions, could be appointed. These delegates would be familiar with the demands, etc., of the members of their respective unions, and at the all-in trade union conferences, attended by rank-and-file delegates, a programme of demands could be drawn up around which all workers could be rallied.

This brings in question No. 2, and demands that the line of trade union policy should be not only one of defence against employers' attacks, but also of an offensive for winning better conditions ; that is, to become weapons of struggle for the workers, *and used as such.* When demands for higher wages are tabled every preparation for strike action must be made to enforce these demands if necessary. The danger of arbitration must be explained to the workers concerned (past examples being used), and every attempt made to broaden the struggle by bringing in other sections and all available information such as profits, etc., of the industry concerned, made available for the workers.

The " Black Circular," in my opinion, is a reflex of the struggle within the unions against reformist leaders and leadership, and a sign of fear on the part of such leaders against the growing militancy of rank-and-file members. This militancy is manifest in the numbers of strikes, termed unofficial, and in the increasing votes cast for militant candidates for official positions. It is also an attempt to impose a dictatorship from above, and strikes at the very root of trade union democracy.

To deprive trade union members of their liberty to nominate and elect those, who in their opinion are best able to fill leading positions, would result in large numbers leaving the unions in disgust. Thus the disrupters would be proved to be not the bodies mentioned in the circular, but the General Council itself.

The effects of Rationalisation on the workers' standards are disastrous, and large scale rationalisation leads to Cartelisation and Trustification, which can only result in a more intense exploitation of workers.

A few of its results are : (1) discharging of old workers at a constantly decreasing age termed old, who are replaced by younger and unskilled workers ; (2) creation of a permanent army of unemployed ;

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(3) wearing out of the physique of those employed owing to speeding up, etc, resulting in increase in sickness and disability ; (4) a lowering of wages to starvation level, even though productivity increases and profits grow bigger. Against these the trade union movement should struggle for : (1) the maximum 7-hour day, with 6 hours for underground workers and in other dangerous occupations, with no wage reductions ; (2) against all overtime and for holidays with full pay ; (3) against all piecework, but where necessary, for a guaranteed minimum ; (4) the right to rest pauses, definite meal times, etc. These and other demands will assist in the fight against rationalisation.

The ideology of Fascism must be consistently explained to trade union members, and the trade union press can play a large part in such an exposure of Fascism and what it means. Austria and Germany give striking examples of the fact that the destruction of the trade union movement is necessary if Fascism is to exist, therefore the Fascist terror is directed against any genuine working-class organisation. Their theory of collaboration, which is inspired through and directed by the state, deprives the workers of their only effective weapon—the right to strike. The fascist demagogy of no party politics, state and workers' control over industry, are only the means whereby they endeavour to extend their influence over the workers. Along with the exposure in the trade union press, and at all meetings where trade unionists congregate, there must be adopted a vigorous policy in the trade union itself. This will result in winning back the thousands of workers who have left the unions in disgust with the present reformist policy, and who become easy prey for the Fascists. The issues confronting the employed and unemployed must be linked together on every occasion ; this will assist in retaining the confidence of our unemployed members and isolate Fascism from this section of the workers.

I am convinced that the United Front is essential. The trade unions are the backbone of the Labour Movement, and on them rests a big responsibility in the fight against Fascism and War. Success in this direction depends upon the manner in which trade union militants conduct the struggle against rationalisation, the "Black Circular," and by proving to the workers their ability to lead their struggles, regardless of political opinions. On this basis the workers themselves will build up and cement the United Front from below in spite of the advice issued from above by so-called leaders who are isolated from, and ignorant of, the needs and moods of the workers.

GEORGE BURDESS (*Chairman, Dawdon Lodge, Durham Miners' Association*).

From a Woodworker

(1) When Mr. A. Conley speaks of the need for the co-ordination of the trade union forces that does not mean that Mr. Conley speaks of the need for the industrial, *i.e.*, the real, basic, unity of the working class. What Mr. A. Conley desires is the "rationalisation" of trade union leadership, the concentration of that leadership into fewer hands. This would simplify the auctioneering and other problems with which the trade union gentlemen are concerned, and it would at the same time assist the purchasers of labour-power, since it would save time and they would the better know "their men." "The trade unions are becoming a fixed part of the steadying and regulating machinery of capitalist society in the efforts the capitalists are making to consolidate their exploitation on the basis of industrial serfdom (Fascism ?). Through the trade union leaders their function is to determine the precise degree of exploitation the working class is prepared, at any given moment, to endure, to concur in fixing that degree of exploitation for a given period, and to guarantee security for the capitalist exploiter against any spasmodic effort of resistance on the part of the wage-slave."

(2) I hold no opinion as to what trade union policy *ought to* be at the present time. I am interested to convince the trade union membership that the trade

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union movement is a capitalist outpost in the ranks of labour ; that it is an obstruction lying across the path to proletarian emancipation. " The primary functions of unionism are defensive, but trade unionism has abandoned the defensive struggle, and through the mere fact of its existence, has negatived any improvised resistance to capitalist aggression which might have sprung from the natural, instinctive solidarity of the workers themselves. Trade unionism has not alone failed to act as a brake upon the decline of wages, but has acted as a brake upon the natural resistance to such a decline. . . . Capitalism has progressed and trade unionism has remained stationary. The economic and political pressure upon the working class becomes daily more intolerable, while at the same time trade unionism shows itself to be less and less efficient as a fighting machine. What ceases to serve the working class obstructs its progress."

(3) Proves the point as to the real function of " modern " trade unionism : it is a capitalist agency masquerading as a working-class movement. If that circular (16) be operated against " militants " in their quest for " office," then the obvious policy under such circumstances would be, as it ought to be now, to concentrate, not on " office," nor on circulars which bar the way thereto, but on the more unexciting and better task of making the rank-and-filers think and act as revolutionists. The main question *is* to convince the average worker of the need for the proletarian revolution, using all questions as they arise to illustrate and prove the revolutionary viewpoint. The " problem " of organising against reaction will *then* be easy.

(4) Again, I am not concerned with what the unions *ought* to do with regard to rationalisation, etc. *They cannot* avoid *taking sides with the capitalist against the worker*. But the attitude of the class-conscious worker, inside or outside these unions is clear : rationalisation, *i.e.*, the speeding-up, the elimination of all conceivable forms of waste rendered possible by the development of machine production, plus the concentration of the ownership of these machines, etc., into ever fewer hands, *proves* Marxism as a worthy weapon in the arsenal of the class struggle, and rationalisation, etc., ought to be explained to the workers from that point of view. Resistance to the encroachments of capital could then be better organised.

(5) Officially, the trade unions can take no *effective* steps against " fascism." They, themselves, are " fascist " in essence. Circular 16 proves that point : it is an attempt to rape the worker of his democratic " rights " inside " his own " organisation ; an attempt to " train " him in what he " can and must do without " inside these unions, prior to hitting him over the head in industry with the loaded stick of reaction. And there is another reason for this move : the capitalist class of this country are pulling the wires for an attack upon the Soviet Union ; what better move could be instituted against the pro-Soviet forces here than that of slinging them out of the unions, etc., etc. ? All this proves that trade unionism takes the side of capitalism against the workers. Only by convincing the average worker that that is so will one be able to pull the real basis from under that officialdom and send it headlong into the gutter where it politically belongs.

(6) The trade unions and Labour Party are capitalist agencies in the ranks of the working class. They will defend capitalism, they are doing so, on any issue that smells of attempting to unify the working class. I am not a C.P. member ; I have no time for " united fronts " with these forces of reaction. The problem is to gain the support of the average worker, and the C.P. in my opinion, makes a tactical error in wasting so much time on these side issues. In my view a real revolutionary party would scorn a " united front " with any other organisation realising that revolutionary strength and clearness of vision arise from struggling alone ; against all comers ; against the tide ; hostile to all other movements.

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[The quotations in the answers to questions (1) and (2) are from *Craft Unionism or Industrial Unionism : Which ?* published about 1923.]

D. SHERRIFF (*Amalgamated Society of Woodworkers, Hammersmith No. 1 Branch*).

From a Distributive Worker

As the contradictions of capitalist society are brought more and more into open daylight, as the concentration of capital places the power of control in fewer hands and as reactionary forces seek more and more to destroy the power of organised labour, it is extremely necessary that the workers themselves should seek a method to obtain the best possible conditions from a system of society which is not only decaying, but is also trying to drive humanity back to the dark ages of barbarity. How are we to combat this Frankenstein monster of monopoly finance which is speeding up and increasing the rate of exploitation and lowering the standard of living of the workers ? It is evident to anyone with a smattering of working-class education that a drive for a hundred per cent. trade unionism is imperative and also a campaign for one great union which would enable working-class forces to be controlled centrally. How is this to be accomplished ? In the first case, it is necessary to arouse the workers. This can be done only by action, taking an interest in the factory conditions, the living conditions, wages and everything which affects the lives of the workers or shall I say to take up the everyday struggle of the workers, to kill or clear away the doubt in the minds of the workers that trade unionism is just finding cushy jobs for a few officials and to prove to the workers that trade unionism is definitely out to improve these conditions. The workers will have to be steeled in struggle and not saturated in Mondism and other defeatist propaganda if they are going to carry out their historic mission. I believe if the workers can be made militant and class-conscious, that in turn will bring about the co-ordination of not only the trade union forces, but of all working-class organisations.

What should be the line of Trade Union policy in the present economic situation ?

In my opinion, seeing that profits are for ever increasing, it is reasonable to suggest that trade unions should not only resist cuts, but should ask for increases in wages in proportion to the increase in profits ; a demand for a forty-hour week and a week's holiday with pay for all workers should be tabled and if necessary, backed by strike action. Where workers have already applied for increases, they should receive the full backing of the trade union movement.

Referring to the T.U.C. Circular, here it is necessary to stop and ponder. We have more than one instance in recent years of trade union officials handing over the workers' bag and baggage to Fascism. Why is it that the T.U.C. officials are attempting to keep out all militants from official positions ? Is it because they wish to pursue the line of least resistance, the way of all Social Democrats the short cut to Fascism, or is it because they cannot stand up to intelligent criticism of class-conscious workers. There are reasons to believe that this circular has not been produced in the interest of the workers, but for the purpose of stemming the revolutionary upsurge of the workers stimulated by the deepening capitalist crisis which, in turn, has brought about increased exploitation and worsening of the conditions of the working class. This will not help to strengthen T.U.C. organisation, but will have the opposite effect. " Thou hypocrite, first remove the beam from thine own eye, and then thou shalt see more clearly to remove the mote from thy neighbour's eye," applies very appropriately to the T.U.C. Does the T.U.C. believe in dictatorship ? When it wishes to gull the worker, no. When it wishes to disarm the worker, yes. Undoubtedly, it is a policy which promotes not unity, but disunity ; not a strengthening of working-class forces, but a weakening ; not a policy which will lead the workers to victory, but to defeat ; not to Socialism, but to Fascism.

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Rationalisation of any industry is introduced for the purpose of cutting down costs of production, for throwing more and more workers on to the industrial scrap-heap and for prolonging the life of capitalism. Capitalism holds no hope for the worker, therefore it is or at least should be, the policy of the T.U.C. to hasten its end and not to prolong it. "It's dead, but won't lie down," says Gracie Fields; it is the historic mission of the workers to lay it to rest and pave the way for socialist production and a full life for the proletariat.

"Divided we fall, united we stand." The trade unions possess the power of uniting the working-class movement; by removing its ban and giving a lead to the United Front forces, it can deal the death blow to Fascism for no power can retard a united working-class movement, not even the hellish implements of war. I am of the firm opinion that if the Trade Union and Labour Movement believe in what they preach, if they study what has happened in other capitalist countries or if they have listened to the wisdom from the mouths of Social Democratic leaders (gained only over the dead bodies of the workers), then it is impossible to turn down the United Front. Fascism and war means death, disease, misery, want, the liberation of everything that is vile and ungodly, the destruction of civilisation. Surely, it cannot be the policy of the workers to support these evils by delaying and placing obstacles in the path of unity? A united front of all workers is the only safeguard against Fascism. I feel it should be the duty of the trade union and labour movement to seek for a basis by which the whole of the working-class forces could rally themselves for the coming heavy attack of the capitalist forces; failing this, the workers' chains will be welded more firmly.

J. T. KILLIAN (*Member, National Union of Distributive and Allied Workers, Co-operative Party, Labour Party, N.C.L.C.*).

From a Postal Worker

(1) The co-ordination of the trade unions is very necessary. It is questionable, however, as to whether Mr. Conley desires the co-ordination of the machinery of the trade unions as distinct from the unity of the rank-and-file. Recently there were three million workers demanding wage increases, but nothing was done to weld them into a single force. The co-ordination of the rank-and-file must be built up in the branches and forced upwards until the general movement forces the trade union leader to join in.

(2) The line of trade union policy should be for the shorter working week and abolition of casual labour. I should like to see a powerful movement in all industries for the abolition of piece rates and bonus systems connected with output of work. Once a wage claim is prepared it should be popularised, spread through the workshops and discussed in the local journals so that in time it comes forward at district or area committee meetings continuously, whilst the negotiations are in progress.

(3) The T.U.C. circular certainly deserves the title of the "Black Circular." It is obvious that it is being used, not to strengthen the unions but to strengthen the position of reactionary trade union officials at the expense of the militant workers who are fighting for a rank-and-file policy. The effect of this move if it became a large scale success would be to create social-fascist organisations which would be appendages to the State.

(4) Rationalisation schemes, like the Cotton Control Board and compulsory amalgamation in mining, are surely brought about by the centralisation of capital, and where this occurs it can be regarded as preparation for terrific attacks on wages and conditions. Such schemes should be fought unceasingly, but some people are welcoming these schemes and are therefore assisting in the development of fascist machinery in the economic field.

(5) The fight against Fascism should be expressed in the national policy of the

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unions. Preparation of propaganda in the factories should be directed to show the political as well as the economic aspect of a strike policy. The significant lack of action on the part of the trade union leaders can be attributed only to the fact that they realise that the first practical step in the fight is the formation of the United Front, which they do not desire.

(6) (*a*) The advent of Fascism in this country would be the beginning of attacks on the conditions of the workers which could not be effected without the suppression of the trade unions as at present constituted. The unions therefore as economic organs must in the interest of their own preservation, accept the United Front.

(*b*) The unions as affiliated bodies to the Labour Party have an important part to play in maintaining the freedom of expression and political rights which exist. The extension of the basis of the anti-fascist movement in the trade unions to a United Front will force the Labour Party to fall in line. This should be the task for the unions.

A Branch Committee Member of the Union of Post Office Workers.

From a Railway Clerk

Co-ordination of trade union forces is essential if monopoly capitalism is to be fought with any degree of success. To this end it is essential that organisation on a craft basis should be largely abandoned in favour of organisation by industry. In many modern factories the lines of demarcation between various trades have practically ceased to exist, and there is constant inter-union friction as to who should organise whom, or more frequently there is no attempt to organise the workers at all. A drive to organise the workers on an industrial basis would remove these frictions and difficulties. Restrictions on the entry to unions should be abolished, and subscriptions lowered to enable the mass of lowly paid girl and juvenile workers to join. Workers moving from one industry to another should be enabled to transfer their membership to the appropriate union without loss of benefit, and the unemployed organisations should be linked up with the trade unions on a similar basis. Clerks and technicians would be more easily drawn into the trade unions, as at present they feel that their existing craft unions for obvious reasons are too weak to protect them from victimisation. Trade union funds should be pooled on a national scale, as the hardest fights usually take place in the industries where unemployment has drained the union funds. Trade union constitutions should be made more democratic by, for instance, providing for the election of delegations to the T.U.C. and Labour Party conferences on a regional basis, each delegate being answerable to the members who elected him.

Following on this reorganisation of the trade unions, the T.U.C. General Council should call on each union to prepare a national programme for its industry, embodying a national minimum wage and a shorter working week. These programmes should then be presented to the employers simultaneously, and would rally the workers so solidly behind the leaders that the inability of capitalism to concede those demands would enable them in conjunction with the political leadership to go forward rapidly to the conquest of political and economic power for the workers. In the meantime, where demands for higher wages have been tabled strong rank-and-file pressure must be organised to ensure that no compromise is accepted by the existing leadership.

The "Black Circular" should be strenuously opposed because (*a*) it lumps together as "disruptive elements" fascists, who enter the unions to destroy them and communists, who aim at giving the unions more power than even the leaders wish for them; (*b*) it further restricts trade union democracy by extending the control of the head office bureaucracies to purely local and branch affairs; and (*c*) it is directed against some of the members most active in building up the unions.

Capitalist rationalisation schemes mean compensation for the shareholders, the

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sack for many workers, and speed up for the remainder. Such schemes, even if introduced by a Labour Government must be strenuously resisted unless they provide for the absorption of the unemployed by the reduction of working hours without loss of pay or worsening of conditions and the creation of new industries to absorb the remainder.

Fascism can only be defeated ultimately by the trade union movement reorganising itself on the lines suggested in the first part of this contribution and going forward together with the working class political parties to the rapid conquest of economic and political power. Fascist moves by the National Government or the Blackshirts can in the meantime be countered by strikes and demonstrations, but if the workers continue to lose faith in the compromising leadership of the working-class movement, as they are doing, nothing will prevent this country from going through a period of fascist dictatorship.

Hence the importance of the acceptance by the British Trade Union and Labour movement of the United Front, not only as an international gesture to the workers of the world, but also as an absolute necessity here in Britain if the movement is to infuse new life by drawing into its leadership those militant elements which will make all the difference between defeat and victory.

D. F. Buckley (*Member, Chiswick Branch, Railway Clerks' Association*).

From a Youth member of the Clerks

(1) National co-ordination is of immediate importance, and the rivalries between Unions catering for workers in the same industry can only weaken the demands for better conditions. But wholesale amalgamation in "general" unions would lead to immobility, and bureaucratic organisation. The chief obstacle to amalgamation of unions for workers in certain industries has been the opposition of union officials who are not prepared to submerge their secretarial positions. Federation in industrial groups, of which there are roughly seventeen would solve many difficulties.

Local co-ordination through the Trades Councils should be made more effective by giving them more authority.

Particular attention must be paid to the organisation of young workers, for large sections of the present generation do not know the advantages of Trade Unionism. The formation of Youth Sections, Junior Trades Councils, Sports and Cultural Movements as outlined in the report to the Weymouth Congress, and the Memorandum submitted to the National Conference of Trades Councils would create interest among the Youth.

(2) Recognising that capitalism is no longer progressive, that with the deepening of the economic crises capitalism in order to exist will make more and more demands from the workers, Trade Union policy should be shaped to hasten the downfall of capitalism. The struggle for better conditions must be persistent, and not as the present tendency is, only to carry out campaigns after reductions in wages, etc., have been made. Long negotiations weaken the strength of the Trade Unions, and quick decisive strikes can be much more effective in gaining concessions, *e.g.*, the recent London Bus Strike, the return to work after a strike has been declared pending negotiations is definitely bad, and every effort should be made to keep the strike in progress, as this is the best means of forcing concessions. Considerable attention must be given to organising support for strikes throughout the Trade Union Movement, and a Central Strike Fund to augment Union Funds is necessary

(3) A circular against disruptive elements is very necessary, but the disruptive elements are those who receive honours for "services rendered" to the capitalist class.

(4) Rationalisation in all its forms means one thing to the workers—worsened conditions. These schemes should be exposed and demands made that if rationalisation is to be put into operation,

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the whole benefits of such schemes should be passed on to the workers.

(5) Fascism, whether of the National Government or the Blackshirt variety, can only be met by the United Front of the working class, adding to it all those democratic, radical intellectual elements in a People's Front. In the Unions special committees should be set up in the areas based upon delegates from branches to give special attention to War and Fascism, these committees should be linked through the Trades Councils, drawing the union membership into direct activity in demonstrations and meetings. The time is not remote when the workers will have to adopt a Defence Organisation to protect their organisations and members against intimidation and brutal attack.

(6) Since the immediate concern of all Trade Unionists, whether they are members of a political party or not, is the fight for better economic conditions, all proposals for joint activity around these economic issues made by any of the three working-class political parties would strengthen such demands. Experience has shown that where workers in any particular factory have had the direct assistance of the political parties in strikes, etc., these strikes have been the most successful. Continuous pressure must be brought to bear upon Union Executives through the Union Conferences in resolutions for the Labour Party Conference.

JOSEPH THOMAS (*North-West Industrial Branch, National Union of Clerks*; *Secretary, London Sports and Cultural Movement*; *E.C. Youth Advisory Council*).

From an Upholsterers' Organiser

Answers to your six questions, though correct in detail, miss the essential kernel of the problem, unless based on a recognition of the fact that two fundamentally divergent lines of policy at present seek expression through the Trade Union Movement.

One, the official policy of the T.U.C., basically corresponds to that of the National Government. Although differing in many aspects as to how to achieve the desired objective, namely, the stabilisation of the *Status quo*, on one point they are unanimous. *The Left must be outlawed*!

The National Government seeks forcibly to suppress the Left by sedition bills, anti-trade union bills, prosecutions, and cunning restrictions of political democracy in general. The T.U.C. seeks to restrict inner trade union democracy by its Black Circular: and by Arbitration schemes, etc., strives to isolate control of wage movements, negotiations, and so on from direct rank and file influence by wrapping them up in a maze of complicated machinery. In both cases the method is identical—what the close meshed net of bureaucratic control fails to hold is to be forcibly suppressed.

The other is a widespread, but less clearly defined line of policy based on a growing recognition that the T.U.C. policy of subordinating the *class interests* of the workers to the "*interests of the community as a whole*" (*i.e.*, actually capitalist class interests) however wrapped up in socialist phrases, means, in its application under present-day conditions, the first relatively peaceful stages of Fascism and War.

With varying degrees of clarity, this movement extends from the Communists on the extreme left, to rank-and-file workers, Branch Officials, District Committees, etc. We must admit a degree of confusion amongst such oppositional workers regarding the tactical line to be pursued in the complicated double fight against the attacks of the employers and the reactionary forces within our movement. Also a lack of organisational unity. Often strength is dissipated on conflict over secondary issues. But already, as in the Busmen's Movement, this leftward swing is showing its potential power. *That is why the mailed fist of the T.U.C. is reaching out*!

The line of the T.U.C. is definite and consolidated. The General Council recognises that the unstated implications of its policy demands the Black Circular.

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If we allow their line to be carried through the power of the trade unions to defend working conditions will be broken. Our movement will be a mere tail wagged by the dog of the capitalist state—fascist in essence whatever "free" and "democratic" forms may be temporarily retained.

Only by starting off with an appreciation of this fundamental opposition of forces can the six questions be answered.

The fight for a militant trade union policy will not be an easy one. It will not be allowed to develop peacefully, but will be under heavy fire from Transport House. Slander, de-franchisement and victimisation will have to be faced. Complications will arise by reason of the diversity of organisations and agreements. Space is too short even to outline the tactical and organisational problems involved, but I hope to see a clarification of these at the LABOUR MONTHLY Conference.

There are certain immediate steps, however, on which there should be general agreement. The drawing of the unorganised workers into the movement on the basis of a fight for better conditions; the simultaneous building up of shop Committees and Shop Stewards' Movements; the revitalisation of the Branches as centres for guiding the struggle against wage cuts, speed up and unemployment; the fight against all restrictions on inner trade union democracy.

Finally, we cannot restrict our efforts to the purely industrial field. The building up of the United Front is essential. War menaces every working-class home. In this respect I think the LABOUR MONTHLY could help by publishing a detailed analysis of the development of the United Front in France and its influence on the trade union movement there.

J. R. SHANLEY (*E.C. Member and Organiser, Amalgamated Union of Upholsterers*).

From a Working Farmer*

(1) Co-ordination of the trade union forces is necessary and the first step towards that objective is as follows :—

(*a*) Union members of all locals should meet for the purpose of determining what their local grievances are, each member should be encouraged to express himself or herself in cases where there are women members. Definite decisions should be reached, including a call for a national conference of each union. Delegates should be elected from the rank and file of the membership of the local and sent as representatives to the National Conference. Under no consideration should paid officials be sent as delegates.

(*b*) The rank and file delegates from all the locals will meet at the National Conference and there present their grievances and decisions. As a result from the accumulated grievances and decisions, the conference should bring down a definite set of decisions—incorporating the grievances and decisions of all the locals as well as a call to all other Unions for a National All Union Congress. Delegates should be elected from the floor of the conference to represent each union at the National All Union Congress.

(*c*) At the National All Union Congress, the delegates from all the various National Union Conferences, will give their reports and as a result from all the various reports, definite decisions should be brought down. A Bill should be prepared, outlining the demands of the All Union Congress, dealing with wages, working hours, conditions in the factory, shop or mine, attitude towards the unemployed, war and fascism, medical and hospital treatment for the sick, etc., etc. A delegation should be elected to present the Bill to the government of the country, while the National All Union Congress is in session if at all possible and a Committee should be elected composed of members of the Congress, to carry on the work of popularising the demands of the Congress and to

*The LABOUR MONTHLY is glad to include this contribution from an organised working farmer in this trade union discussion as a symbol of that vital world alliance between the workers and peasants or working farmers which is already in existence in numerous places throughout North America.

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gain public support for the Bill. Members of Parliament should be asked to give their support to the Bill, if they failed to do so they should be exposed ; paid officials and leaders of craft and trade unions should also be asked to give their support to the Bill and failing to do so they too should be exposed to the rank and file membership of the unions and the working masses.

(*d*) The continued effective co-ordination of the rank-and-file membership can be accomplished, if these conferences and the National Congress, of All Unions, meet at least once a year, but it is very important that the delegates be elected from the rank-and-file membership and not from the paid officials of the trade unions. In general and with very few exceptions, trade union paid officials have miserably failed to represent the interests of the rank-and-file membership of their various unions and it is very important that the rank-and-file members get to realise that if they want anything done, they must decide to do it for themselves.

(2) In the present economic situation the trade unions should organise and co-ordinate their forces to resist (*a*) wage-cuts ; (*b*) resist longer working hours or speed-up policies. Demands :—I. Increase of wages. II. Shorter hours. III. Better working conditions, if the conditions are at all bad. IV. Non-contributory Social Insurance. V. Free medical and hospital care and treatment for all workers, employed or unemployed, without any discrimination whatsoever. VI. Adequate cash relief for the unemployed ; the unemployed are a valuable ally to workers who have a job, in case of a strike the employers will be looking for scabs to take your place. If you support the demands of the unemployed they will help you on the picket line to keep scabs off the job ; and in that way assure you victory over your bosses. Where a demand for an advance in wages has been tabled follow the procedure as outlined in answer to Question One ; agitate among the workers in the factory for action, distribute pamphlets describing the grievance from the workers' standpoint, call a meeting of rank and file workers and follow example referred to above.

(3) The Circular, which proposes to revise the trade union constitutions with a view to excluding militant trade unionists from election as delegates or officials. If the above-mentioned revision is carried out, it will strike a dagger through the heart of the trade union movement, in so far as the interests of the rank-and-file membership is concerned. The militant members are the life blood of any movement and without them you have no movement at all. If you want co-ordination between your officials and the capitalist class, then exclude your militant members from the position of delegate or official. On the other hand if you want real results—elect all militant delegates to official positions and you will have a real live union.

(4) The rationalisation schemes and control boards, that are being popularised by various political parties and supported by some so-called labour leaders should be sternly fought and exposed as Fascist measures. Control through capitalist State departments means capitalist dictatorship, carried on through the capitalist State and of course, in the interests of capitalists. It is strange that working people continue to hope and believe that some form of socialism will evolve out of the capitalist State, they don't seem to realise that the capitalist State is the instrument of capitalism, to be used in the interests of capitalists and not in the interests of working people ; it is only after the overthrow of the capitalist State, by the working class and the establishment of the proletarian State on the ruins of the capitalist State, only then can we expect rationalisation schemes and control boards to function in the interests of the working class. The trade unions should fight against these Fascist measures and expose them for what they are.

(5) Build up a United Front along the same lines as described in answer to Question One. Link up the employed and unemployed workers, organised and unorganised, women, youth and children

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movements, religious institutions or any organisation which is opposed to the development of Fascism, link them all up with the trade union movement and put up a determined fight against the development of Fascism.

(6) (*a*) The attitude of the trade unions as economic organs should be to maintain or improve the standard of living of their membership and the working class as a whole, including the unemployed. The unions should put up a determined struggle against the capitalist offensive for a lower standard of living for the working class.

(*b*) The unions should affiliate with the Labour Party for the purpose of building up the United Front against Fascism and War. This should be done in spite of the decision of the Labour and Socialist International allowing its affiliated sections freedom of action in this respect.

However, to counteract the above mentioned condition, a constant agitation should be carried on by the rank and file of the membership of the unions, with the view of bringing about concerted action of all sections of the various labour organisations, employed and unemployed, and unite them all into one grand United Front against Fascism and War.

H. E. MILLS (*Member of the Farmers' Unity League, Saskatchewan, Canada*).

Previous contributions to this discussion will be found in the April issue, pp. 244-248, from *R. G. L. Bowyer* (Labour Councillor: President, Chemical Workers' Union); *R. Beamish* (Chairman, Abercrave Lodge, South Wales Miners' Federation: Vice-Chairman Abercrave and Ystradgynlais Trades and Labour Council; E.C. member, Anthracite Combine Committee); *H. Holt* (Secretary, Ardsley Branch Locomotive Engineers and Firemen); *R. Pigford* (Delegate, Ryhope Lodge, Durham Miners' Association). In the May issue, pp. 307-11, from *N. Walkington* (President, Leeds No. 1 Branch, Patternmakers' Association: Delegate to Leeds Trades Council); *W. H. Bennett* (President, Tilmanstone Branch, Kent Mineworkers' Association: Secretary, Dover and District Trades Council, Prospective Labour Candidate for Dover); *S. Tutill* (Yorkshire Miners' Association; *J. F. Watson* (Chairman, Hetton Lodge, Durham Miners' Association). In the June issue, pp. 367-372, from *G. W. Holloway* (Yorkshire Main Branch, Yorkshire Miners' Association); *Andrew G. Schirn* (Member of National Union of General and Municipal Workers: Branch Delegate to West Ham Trades Council: Member of West Ham Town Council); *Wm. Pearson* (Checkweighman, Broomfield Pit: E.C. member, United Mineworkers' Association: Workmen's Pit Inspector); *Poplar Public Services Branch, National Union of Clerks* (J. H. Lloyd, Chairman); *G. Finlayson* (District Committee Member and District Delegate to Management Committee. National Union of Waterworks Employees); *P. A. Palmer* (Assistant Secretary, Deptford No. 2 Branch, Amalgamated Engineering Union). In the July issue, pp. 430-439, from *Ellen McCullough* (Transport and General Workers' Union, 1/128 (Staff) Branch; *W. Jenkinson* (Transport and General Workers' Union, 1/358 Hammersmith Trams Branch); *J. Taylor* (No. 327 Wath Main Branch, Yorkshire Mine Workers' Association); *Rowland Hill* (Railway Clerks' Association Delegate West Yorks Divisional Council and Annual Conference); *Tom Mann*; *E. H. Bryan* (Member London Divisional Council, Amalgamated Union of Building Trade Workers); *Geo. Richardson* (Checkweighman, Member Horden Lodge, Durham Miners' Association); and *Charlie Harrison* (Organiser, Waterproof Garment Workers' Trade Union).

A Correction.

Will readers please note that on p. 438 of the July issue (the top of the second column and third line) the words "Transport and General Workers" should have read "Tailors and Garment Workers."

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II. A Preliminary Survey of the Discussion

By JOHN MAHON

SINCE April the readers of the LABOUR MONTHLY have been contributing to a discussion on the problems facing the trade union movement. The contributions, 29 in number to date, have been welcomed by all readers interested in this vital question. Many show a high level of understanding, and all express the sincere desire of active trade unionists and local officials to advance the interests of the workers.

The twenty-nine include 10 miners, 3 metal workers, 3 rail workers, 2 building workers, 1 tramwayman, 1 chemical worker, 1 garment worker, 1 postal worker, 2 distributive or clerical workers, 1 clerks' branch, 1 waterworks employee, 1 upholsterer, 1 unstated, 1 youth, and 1 working farmer—from Saskatchewan (Canada).

Of these only 8 hold no positions, the others include 5 holders of national functions (E.C., organisers, etc.), 4 of district functions, and 12 of branch functions. 2 Labour councillors and 1 prospective Labour candidate are included.

The small proportion of metal workers is remarkable. While it is perhaps understandable that no docker is included, it is surprising to find no spokesman for the London busmen, and no one from the N.U.R.

Beyond the statement of those who are Labour councillors or Labour candidate, the political affiliation of the contributors is not given. It is significant that it can no longer be estimated with certainty from the contribution itself. Already the voices of the militant Labour man and the Communist are becoming indistinguishable.

Twenty-nine is not a large proportion of the many thousands of active trade union office holders, or of the 750 invited to take part, but among these 29 we find expressed a diversity of views that sheds a lively light on the ideological chaos that is British trade unionism to-day, and on the class instinct which will find the way out of this chaos to the revolutionary clarity which alone will save the movement. The tendencies range from downright defeatism and despair to revolutionary Marxism, with almost every variety of combination.

Why are these Problems so Urgent?

This article is not intended in any sense as a reply or as a complete survey of the discussion. It is intended to examine some of the tendencies shown and to direct attention to important aspects of the problem not

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yet sharply raised, in order that the continuation of the discussion and in particular the proposals to be brought to the Conference may not only throw light on the trade union situation, but be part of a forward movement of the branches and the factory organisations.

That is indeed the central problem which will face the coming conference—how is the growing militancy of trade union membership to break through the restrictions imposed by Transport House and to help the struggle for the workers' demands, for peace and for socialism ?

A brief glance at the situation shows the urgency of this question.

While the discussion has been going on, the war policy of the National Government has ripened fast. Now organisation for the coming war dominates the whole political, economic and social life of the country. The rôle of Fascism as the striking force against the working class in order to make war possible has been openly demonstrated. Hitler Germany is to be used by the National Government as an international striking force for the war on socialism by the attack on the Soviet Union.

The rapidity of the development of the National Government's war drive has only been equalled by the haste with which Transport House has set out to change the anti-war line of the Labour Movement into a line up behind the Government under the pretence of " defence." Following the abandonment of the general strike slogan at Weymouth and Southport, Transport House has rained royalist and militarist instructions upon the Labour movement until a file of its decisions looks like a combination of the Court Circular and the *London Gazette*.

The growing anger of the Labour and Trade Union workers, expressed in the outburst against Citrine's knighthood, is a measure of the disappointment of the workers at getting instructions to join the Jubilee and take part in blackouts when what they wanted was the development of the movement for higher wages and to prepare the " victory of socialism " at the general election.

The Black Circular, the instruction to keep off the streets when Fascists are about, but to throw the Communists out of the trade unions, and now the abandonment of the peace crusade and the replacement of " Victory of Socialism " by " Labour will do Well," are measures of the course which Transport House is steering in the wake of capitalist government policy.

The wages movement which Mr. Conley, president of the Weymouth T.U.C. promised to co-ordinate has been side-tracked by arbitration and small concessions, and by the promise of what a Third Labour Government would do. The partial strikes of the engineers and others have been declared as disruption by executives. Now Transport House is not even pretending to fight for a Third Labour Government. The line of class collaboration begun with the betrayal of the General Strike

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and with the Mond-Turner conversations has now reached the stage of preparing to join in a new war.

But this is only part of the situation which the Conference will consider. The other side is the growing movement and feeling of the workers. It is not 1914. There was no need for Black Circulars in 1914.

The growing militancy of the workers is shown in the rising militancy and solidarity in partial strikes, by the growing refusal to tolerate Black-shirt meetings, by mass rejection of the Black Circular, by the advance of the wages movement to the point of strike demands by dyers and miners, by the 24-hour rally of the whole London bus and tram fleets to the support of the unofficial strike at Nunhead, by the flow of new members into the trade unions.

The rising movement is at the same time a movement for unity. Never were the Communists, officially expelled, banned and excommunicated for the sixth time, in such close contact with the general mass of Labour and Trade Union workers.

The trade union movement has a decisive rôle to play in the further advance of the working class. In this country the trade unions are the organised working class. The branches, the committees, the factory organisations are a network of thousands of organising centres to which the workers come to express their demands and their will.

The ruling class pursues a double line towards the unions, which it hates and fears. It fought as long as it could, with terror and barbarity equal to Hitler's, to prevent their growth. When it had to legalise them it ever since sought to use them as channels through which it could spread its own policy into the workers' ranks. For this purpose it has always worked through handfuls of leaders whose aspirations are to climb out of the working class. A never ending conflict goes on in the unions, the workers seeking to compel the union machine to do their bidding and express their will to action, while the capitalists strive to use the machine to sidetrack the workers' movement.

The Trades Union Congress will meet in September at Margate, where the General Council will make still further steps to the right, on the road to war. The LABOUR MONTHLY conference will have the opportunity of rallying those forces which stand for a working-class line for the trade unions, and to work out the proposals and tactics around which the unions can be won for action on such a line.

That the positive base on which such an advance can be made exists is shown in the LABOUR MONTHLY discussion. While there is as yet neither a clear solution to every problem nor a complete measure of agreement on the policy of Transport House, the discussion shows that Labour Councillors, Trade Union district and branch officials, and Communists have a wide measure of agreement as to the need for an advance, the need

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for unity, the need for action, and the hopelessness of expecting Transport House to be of any help.

The General Results of the Discussion

On Wages Co-ordination there is general agreement in favour, but wide disagreement as to how the first steps can be taken and what the character of such steps should be. The division is roughly between those who propose a planned organised drive from the top by means of conferences and those who propose action initiated from below.

On Economic Policy there is general agreement for a line of advance, for a counter offensive. A minority considers that no advance is possible under capitalism. Some voices even deny that a wage increase would be any good if we got it. Among those favouring an advance there is a wide cleft of opinion as to whether increased wages or shorter hours should be the demands. A very strong feeling of solidarity for the unemployed and care for their demands shows itself.

On the Black Circular, the agreement is complete in characterising it as disruptive and dictatorial, and in demanding struggle against it.

On Rationalisation the majority is in favour of opposition to it, with reservations as to its inevitability, but there is a tendency to support it as leading to a unification of the workers' forces and facilitating socialisation. Its effects on workers meet with general condemnation.

Fascism meets with universal reprobation, but a surprising lack of proposals as to how to combat it, those given are mainly organisational. The rôle of the united front here does not receive much attention.

On the United Front there is general agreement as to its desirability, but an almost complete lack of conception of united action and mass pressure as the way to realise it.

Throughout all the questions there is general agreement in a complete lack of faith in the leadership of the T.U.C. Even the Trade Union Staff worker and the Labour Councillors who are strongly under the influence of the ideas spread by the leaders, are at one with the Communists in their complete lack of any faith in Transport House.

The positive basis for an advance is shown not only by agreement on the immediate issues and the need for action, but a strong understanding of the need for action with the aim of developing towards socialism, that is to say, an understanding of the need for fighting to raise wages and improve conditions now and thereby to strengthen the class forces so that the working class can solve the problem of power and thereby finally settle the wages question.

Some Criticisms

If we ask the question, why with such capable and clear forces leading the lower organs of the unions there has not yet been a wide advance against

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Transport House we shall see one of the reasons in the existence of many moods of pessimism and defeatism, and also of much confusion.

Defeatism is uppermost in the contribution of Bro. D. Sheriff, and is one of the results of the repeated betrayals and defeats for which Transport House is responsible. He says :—

> The trade union movement is a capitalist outpost in the ranks of labour ; an obstruction lying across the path to proletarian emancipation . . . . a capitalist agency masquerading as a working-class movement. The trade unions are fascist in essence. Trade unions and the Labour Party are capitalist agencies in the ranks of the working class. . . . . The main question is to convince the average worker of the need for proletarian revolution. Then the problem of organising against reaction will be easy.

Here is very clearly expressed a viewpoint completely defeatist and dangerous in the highest degree. Its conclusion must be to destroy the trade union movement. Its mistake is that it sees only the treachery of the top leaders and fails to notice the splendid solidarity and fighting spirit of the membership.

Defeatism finds other forms of expression. Bro. W. Jenkinson of the Hammersmith trams says :—

> Trade unionism, originally built on democracy and militancy, has developed into a capitalistic institution with middle-class officials.

S. Tutill of the Yorkshire Miners says :—

> If it (the Black Circular) came into action—and somehow I wish it would, from the ashes of the destroyed trade unions—perhaps we should build the greatest movement the world has ever known.

Why do we call such expressions defeatist ? Because the conclusion to be drawn from them is that the trade unions cannot be used now, in this phase, to fight to improve the economic and political situation of the workers. Such an attitude, whatever the phrases which accompany it, and whatever " ultimate " aims it holds out, plays right into the hands of the capitalists, who want nothing more than that the working class should abandon its trade unions, because that means to abandon the organised struggle against its class enemy.

The root of this attitude of defeatism is that the eyes of those who express it see only the officials who are serving the enemy, and do not see the rank and file who continue the battle. It is not the trade unions who have gone over to the enemy, it is the handful of bureaucratic officials occupying the key posts who are poisoning the trade unions by their policy of surrender and frustration of every principle on which the movement was built, and of every desire of the present-day worker for action.

But shall we draw the conclusion, as Bro. Sherriff does, that because of this the trade union movement has become a barrier to revolution ? That would mean that we must destroy the trade unions as the first step

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to revolution? A strange identity of idea with Fascism, which also proposes to destroy the workers' organisations!

The trade unions unite a great mass of workers. Of course if we allow this unity to be misled into surrender this is a defeat. But the officials are not all powerful, they are powerful only in so far as the militants run away from the effort to raise the masses against them.

This attitude raises the question of our conception of the political rôle of the reformist officialdom.

The discussion shows two tendencies here. Speaking of the Black Circular, that is to say, of one of the most clear and sharp expressions of the anti-working class line of the bureaucracy, these expressions occur:—

"bankrupt ideas,"
"shortsighted, a tragic failure to face realities,"
"a cowardly mistake."

The attitude behind such expressions is very prevalent in the movement. It is one of naïve confidence in the leaders; it sees the fresh crimes of men who betrayed the General Strike as "mistakes." After the experience of Germany, can one say it is a "mistake" on the part of a trade union General Council to repeat the splitting of the movement which led to fascist victory? If Comrade McCullough were defending a fortified position in a war, and if the general staff ordered her to withdraw her machine guns from precisely those posts which commanded the enemies' approach, would that be "shortsighted, a tragic failure to face realities"?

No doubt even capable people make mistakes, and even repeat them several times, and remain honestly trying to overcome them.

But those who describe the Black Circular as a "mistake" are making one assumption—that Transport House wants to fight capital and defeat it. If that be true, then the Black Circular is undoubtedly a mistake. But a general staff which makes mistakes like that will never learn anything, and the only way to educate it is to take it out of the headquarters without a moment's delay and put it in the front line trench.

But suppose the object of Transport House is not to fight capital but to sit at peace with it. Then the Black Circular is by no means a mistake, on the contrary it is a bold move. After all, the events of the last 15 years do mean something. Betrayal is an ugly word, but it corresponds to an ugly fact. But one cannot make a habit of being betrayed. We must realise that betrayal now means not only a check to our advance, not only a wage cut, it means a fresh world slaughter and the hell of fascism. We must make impossible any further such "mistakes."

Is it necessary to devote such attention to these expressions? We believe it is, because the development of an attitude which will refuse to allow any further betrayals is now the vital need to save the trade union

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movement. If we consider Transport House as merely making mistakes, we shall spend our time in trying to correct them. But if we see Transport House as following out a definite policy we shall set out to win the masses of the membership for refusal to operate that policy and instead the operation of vigorous class action combined with mass pressure on Transport House to make it abandon that policy.

What is the Alternative to the Present Policy?

This brings us to the central issue raised in the discussion—that of the development of the alternative policy to the present one. A policy without people to express it means nothing. The development of alternative policy must carry with it the development of new leaders, a strong force of men and women in the branches and districts to begin with, who will give expression to the militancy and solidarity of the masses and lead them in the struggle. What shall this policy be? To replace class collaboration by class struggle. Such is the only general line for an alternative policy. Without such a general line we shall drift into a bog of organisational proposals which, apart from policy, mean nothing and won't interest the trade union membership one iota. That this danger is a real one is shown by the large number of contributions which propose to solve the problem of the advance of the wages movement by measures of reorganisation, and by plans of conferences and propaganda. It is also shown by the tendency to oppose the demand for wage increases to that for shorter hours.

Why should we dispute as to whether shorter hours or higher wages would be better? We want both, but it is a question which is the issue in particular industries and the way to find out is to ask the workers. It is fairly clear, for example, that among the miners it is a wages increase that is the sharper issue, while among London busmen the speed-up has made the seven-hour day a burning issue.

But the general line of class struggle has to be brought into action *through the trade unions*. An advance on either wages or hours in any section will give the general movement a great impetus. This advance will be aided if the leading men and women in the factories and branches put forward a line of struggle and of preparation for action on all phases of the struggle. Let the workers decide their demands, the leadership has to show them how to struggle for them.

If the miners, for example, want a wage increase, it is obviously necessary for all militant leaders to prepare a general struggle, to prepare and organise the general sentiment for an increase into decisions and mandates of branches and delegate meetings to terminate the agreement.

This is not so simple as it sounds. This means a sustained and determined struggle against the class collaboration officials who will move

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heaven and earth to retain their grip of the union machine and prevent such decisions being taken.

Precisely here is the weakness of the revolutionary contributions to the discussion. Many contributors speak in general correctly about mass action, about united working class, mass campaigns and so on. But the line of class struggle has got to be applied to the trade union machinery. The shop stewards and branch officials, the militant District Committeemen and E.C. members have to bring the machine into the struggle to give leadership and action to the members. Only in this way can we end the disastrous gap between the militancy of the workers and the passivity of the district and local links of the trade union machine.

Why is it that so many trade union branches with memberships of hundreds count themselves lucky if 20 come to a meeting? How can the movement develop healthy life when the branches are in such a state?

The truth is that the workers don't go to the branch meetings because in many cases there is nothing for them to go for. A round of dreary "business," occasionally varied by abstract discussions.

Comrade Tom Mann is a thousand times right. When speaking with the experience of a lifetime he directs our attention in his contribution to the branch and its connection with the factory life as the key point on which the attention has to be directed.

The transformation of the branches into organs of class struggle, into centres of vigorous trade union activity and life, the organisation of mass activity, is at the centre of the problem of advancing the wages movement.

From the discussion up to date one cannot escape the conclusion that there is a danger that *the trade union active functionaries may lag behind the masses.* The workers who rally so rapidly in struggle are not going to the trade union branches. Often the branches are not, even when led by militants, acting as leading and organising centres for the directing of the trade union machine into action to win the demands of the workers.

It is the lack of such an application of the line of struggle to the local organs of the union that has up to the moment enabled Transport House to hold up the advance of trade union policy in action. The officials of the branches and the districts have the power in their hands to begin this advance if they will use their positions and energy to organise through their branches the militancy of the workers.

The coming Conference, on the 24th and 25th of this month, will afford an opportunity for clarifying the way in which this can be done, and will thereby be of great service to the trade union movement.

Have you written about **HOSPITALITY?**
See note on page 468

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THE FOURTEENTH OF JULY IN FRANCE

[*To enable readers to assess the significance of the People's Front Demonstrations on the Fourteenth of July (the anniversary of the Storming of the Bastille, the central prison of France, by the revolutionary forces of* 1789), *the following documents, specially translated for the* LABOUR MONTHLY, *have been selected. The article by Jacques Duclos immediately following is reprinted from the "Cahiers de Bolchévisme" of July* 1, *the fortnightly organ of the French Communist Party. This is followed by the resolution adopted by a Delegate Conference called by the Committee responsible for organising the demonstrations, setting forth the demands of the People's Front, together with a summary of the number taking part in the principal towns of France.*]

I.

THE working masses again have reason to be grateful to the movement, created by Henri Barbusse and Romain Rolland for carrying into effect the results of the Amsterdam and Paris Congresses. Everyone realises the important part played by this movement in bringing about a unity in action in France, and its initiative in organising a vast demonstration on July 14 has had most satisfactory results.

Indeed, a large number of organisations have given their support to the demonstration, and it is an important fact that there are working together on the same organising committee representatives of the following: the Radical Party, the Intergroup of the Socialist Parties (Socialists of France, Socialist Republicans and French Socialists), the Socialist Party, the Communist Party, the C.G.T. (socialist trade unions), the C.G.T.U. (red trade unions), the League of the Rights of Man and the Intellectuals' Vigilance Committee. Here indeed is a striking testimony to the triumph of the *Front Populaire du Travail, de la Paix et de la Liberté* (People's Front of Labour, Peace and Liberty), for which there seems to be every day a more pressing need in the eyes of the French working population.

All this is a gratifying extension of contacts made in the heart of the *Left Delegation* during the recent ministerial crises. But this time it is not only members of parliament and party leaders who are going to act together.

In every town and village of France, the Socialists, Radicals, members of the various Left parties and the Communists are anxious to unite for July 14. With the trade unionists of the C.G.T. and the C.G.T.U., both of which are supporting the demonstration, they will be able effectively to organise their action for the defence of the workers' bread and of

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Peace and Liberty. The important thing in the present situation is that the wide masses of the people will be able to act together, pitting the strength of their numbers against the activities of their enemies.

To bring about this vast assembly of all the partisans of Peace and Liberty, our Communist Party is taking care to limit the programme of action of the Front Populaire to issues which correspond to the needs of the masses and are at the same time acceptable to the Left organisations.

It is possible within the framework of the present régime to carry out a policy other than that of Laval.

It is possible to make good the budget deficit without putting a further burden on the masses, by making the rich pay and by restricting financial speculation.

It is possible to render ineffective the armed hordes of the *Camelots du roi* and of *Francisme* (the royalists—Ed.), whose provocations against the workers are well known.

It is possible to confiscate the weapons of civil war possessed by the *Croix de Feu* of Colonel-Count de La Rocque.

It is to achieve these ends and so that the people can defend their liberties and prevent the fascist wave from spreading over our country that the Communists have done everything they can to make possible the joint demonstration taking place of the forces of the Left.

No doubt the watchwords of the demonstration of July 14 would gain something from being more precise about the defence of all that concerns the workers' bread, but the essential thing is to ensure that the French masses, by making July 14, 1935, a great day of unity for Bread, Peace and Liberty, bring about that unification which is necessary in view of the coming struggles.

This is why the Communist Party intends to participate with all its forces in the popular celebration of July 14. We were among the first to answer the call of the Amsterdam movement, and we will do all we can to see that those who unite on July 14 will remain united afterwards by the same desire to safeguard Liberty and Peace.

In this way a new blow will be dealt to Fascism, whose shame and horrors we must avoid in our country, the more so as its triumph would not only mean slavery but also the outbreak of a new war.

The Fourteenth of July, 1935, will prove the triumph of the People's Front (Front Populaire), originally put forward by the Communist Party nine months ago. And if our plan has achieved a rapid and striking success, it is because it corresponds to the deep feelings of the masses, who feel the need for unity, as they are determined not to allow themselves to be led back along the path of barbarism.

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As for ourselves, we know that by barring the way to the people's enemies we are acting not only in the present interests of the workers, but also in their future interests, that is to say, for the bringing about of a new society.

It is thus that we, Communists, who proclaim aloud our desire to set up Soviets in France, are working with all our powers to counteract, as far as possible, the evils of capitalism.

From the very fact that we are working in concert with the wide masses of the French people, we, whose perspicacity rendered possible the formation of the People's Front, are certain that those who as yet do not know much about us, will be obliged to agree that all our policy is guided by the desire to defend the people.

And our ultimate objectives will be understood and admitted by the wide masses who, fighting under the banners of the People's Front, will see more and more clearly that the final solution to their ills lies in the triumph of the Soviets.

JACQUES DUCLOS.

II.

The Preparatory Conference of the People's Front.

On Sunday, July 7, in the Magic-City Hall in Paris a regional session of the Committee for Unity of Action against Fascism (C.U.A.A.) was held in preparation for the demonstration of July 14.

This was in the nature of a preparatory meeting at which delegates from all the organisations comprising the People's Front worked out the basic points on which all anti-fascists could agree and which might be called a minimum programme of the People's Front.

There were 1,143 delegates, and the diversity of opinion represented at the meeting and its extremely broad basis can be judged from the following summary of the organisations from which the delegates were drawn. There were 92 communists, 143 socialists, 22 Pelletanist Radicals, 13 Valois Radicals, 10 socialist republicans, 159 from the C.G.T., 106 from the C.G.T.U., 23 autonomists, 3 representing united trade unions, 48 elected from labour municipal councils, 28 ex-servicemen, 39 women, 15 from the youth, 102 delegates from the C.U.A.A. whose organisations were unspecified, 94 from the Amsterdam-Paris movement, 23 from the League of the Rights of Man, 41 from the Red Aid, 16 from the League against Anti-Semitism, and 75 from various political and cultural organisations. There were also—and this was a cause of great satisfaction—93 anti-fascist factory committees represented.

The resolution, which was adopted with 7 abstentions, was as follows:

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The Adopted Resolution

The delegates declared that they accept the reports presented in the name of the C.U.A.A. and formulate their watchwords on the basis of those reports in the following terms:

"Disarmament and dissolution of fascist leagues; against legislation by decrees; against all cuts in wages, grants and pensions; against the dismissal of civil servants and the reduction of the number of jobs; against all attacks on the pensions and the rights of ex-servicemen and war victims; against the two years' service and any increase in military service; against the deceit as to the organisation of passive defence, the militarisation of the civil population, and the utilisation of fascist groups to this end; against the more than infamous laws and for the defence of political and trade union liberties.

"For the broad political and administrative amnesty of all who have fought for bread, peace and liberty; against the high cost of living, for a reduction in the cost of gas, electricity, transport, water, and the denunciation of the disastrous conventions by which the town and district of Paris are bound to concessionary companies; for the carrying out of big public works to re-absorb the unemployed; for the reduction of taxes which hit the workers and the small producers.

"The 1,100 delegates present, speaking in the name of the 500,000 whom they represent and conscious that the majority of the population of Greater Paris is behind them, invite the regional organisations to work out in common a plan of united action for anti-fascist workers in and around factory areas. They call on the masses of Greater Paris to arise in their multitudes on July 14 to show the Government and the fascists the iron will of the People's Front to "defend democratic liberties, to give bread to the workers, work to young people, and peace to humanity as a whole."

JULY 14th.

Summary of Number in the Demonstrations

According to *L'Humanité* of July 15 and 16 the following were the numbers (in brackets) demonstrating in the principal towns of France: Paris (500,000); Marseilles (100,000); Tolouse (60,000); Bordeaux, Nîmes, Angoulême, Saint Etienne and Nantes, 30,000 each; Lyons (25,000); Toulon and Lorient (20,000); Rouen, Tours, Le Harve, Brive, Oran and Perigueux, 15,000 each; Clermont-Ferrand (12,000); Sète and Carcasonne (10,000 each); Nice, Cherbourg, Bergerac and Tarbes (8,000 each); Montauban, Avignon, La Rochelles, Castre, Dijon and Auxerre (6,000). That is to say over 1,000,000 workers demonstrated in these thirty towns alone.

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WEST AFRICA AND THE SEDITION ORDINANCES

By S. R. WOOD

Secretary, Gold Coast Aborigines Society Delegation.

[*The* LABOUR MONTHLY *is glad to afford an opportunity to the Secretary of the Delegation of the Gold Coast Aborigines Society to express his views on the recently held National Peace Congress and, in particular, on what he regards as essential in order to ensure peace in West Africa. While it considers that peace in West Africa cannot fully be attained, such as exists at present in those colonies which were formerly part of the Tsarist Empire and now are part of the Union of Socialist Soviet Republics, until the colonies in West Africa are also free from imperialist domination, the* LABOUR MONTHLY *considers that the writer is fully justified in his exposure of the increasingly repressive measures now being imposed on West Africa in general and the Gold Coast in particular. It would therefore like to join in the appeal of Mr. Wood to all readers to do everything in their power to bring pressure on the British Government to secure the complete repeal of all such measures.*]

AS members of the Gold Coast Aborigines Delegation in London, my colleague, Mr. Moore, and I had the opportunity of attending the National Peace Congress held at the Friends' Meeting House from June 28 to July 2, and had the honour of speaking at the Sunday evening session when Mr. Leonard Barnes and Professor Norman Bentwich spoke on the so-called "Racial Problems" (but as we would prefer to call them—National Problems).

Invited as I am, to write my impressions on the question of war and, in particular, how the National Peace Congress struck me as an African, I feel that a good opportunity has been offered me of bringing West Africa and the Gold Coast, particularly, within the purview of the aims and objects of the National Peace Council. The problems of "Peace and the Pacific," which were discussed by the Chinese Ambassador, Dame Rachel Crowdy, and others, referred purely to China and Japan. On the subsequent days when themes like the "Peace and the Empire," "The Ethics and Politics of the Empire," "The Economics of Empire," "The Racial Problems" and "Education and Peace" were discussed, West Africa was conspicuously absent from the considerations of the speakers. The plight of the natives of South Africa as about the greatest national

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problem discussed generally by Mr. Barnes, and in detail, by Mr. Ballinger, appeared to have drawn from the audience practical demonstrations of sympathy. One questioner elicited from one of the speakers on these so-called " racial problems " the mistaken statement that in West Africa the people were contented and were more or less satisfied with local conditions and with their respective governments.

Here, at this stage, the writer who was seconded by his colleague, addressed the meeting within the few minutes allowed him, and emphasised that although the plight of the Gold Coast African as to his right to his ancestral land was not as precarious as that of his South African brother, yet there had been such grave and acute grievances and disabilities as had impelled, within one single year, the despatch of two separate deputations to the Colonial Office. He also stressed the point that no reliance should be placed by the British public on the " Impressions " of Mr. Charles Roden Buxton (published in the *Labour Magazine* and elsewhere) who, after an absence of only nine weeks, four of which he spent on the high seas, leaving him barely five weeks to travel the length and breadth of the four British dependencies and the French Ivory Coast and Liberia, without any opportunity of seeing any distance beneath the surface, returned to record that the people of West Africa were " happy and contented " when, to his knowledge, there was one of the deputations still in England pressing for certain reforms essential to the happiness, contentment and progress of the people. The political position of this personage as the " Adviser " of the Labour Party and President of its Advisory Committee on Colonial Affairs would appear to reassure the public of the soundness of any opinion that he might express as to the condition of the people of West Africa.

Throughout the course of the Congress the speakers focussed their attention more on the affairs of Europe and the East, less on the Native peoples of South Africa, and still less on West Africa. The essentials of the peace of these places were also discussed. But in view of the absence of proper information the peace and contentment of other parts of Africa were taken for granted. In West Africa, and particularly on the Gold Coast, there has been for many years a gradually increasing economic exploitation of the people. Administratively the Government has assumed autocratic tendencies, and there is now an open attempt to interfere with the customs and institutions of the people in a manner which is greatly endangering the peace of the country. Labour is so mercilessly exploited that, for an instance, although the Ashanti Goldfields Ltd. have become so prosperous and successful as to pay dividends ranging from 75 per cent. to 130 per cent. within the last four years, yet there is hardly a living wage paid to the Native labourer. A recent attempt at a strike with a view to securing a more satisfactory scale of wages was deemed a

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" treason " and many of the leading workmen were imprisoned by the Government.

Another feature of the administration of the Gold Coast is the attempt gradually to introduce into the country the systems of government obtaining in East and South Africa. This has led to the passing of the Sedition Ordinance in the teeth of the protests of the people and the unanimous opposition of the African unofficial members of the Legislative Council. Examining closely the provisions of the Ordinance, at once its intentions to humiliate and oppress the people and to muzzle the press so as to prevent articulation in times of oppression become vivid. Under the Sedition law passed as far back as the year 1892, and under which not a single prosecution has taken place, " sedition " was defined as an " intent to bring His Majesty into hatred, contempt or ridicule," and the publication of " any defamatory or insulting matter, whether by writing, print, word of mouth, or in any other manner, concerning His Majesty." This is in keeping with the English law. It is not an offence in England to be in possession of seditious literature, but in the local law the importation of any books, newspapers or documents which in the opinion of the Governor in Council contain seditious writings, or the possession of them, would render such importer or possessor liable to imprisonment for three years. The innocent receiver of such " seditious " or prohibited publication is also liable to imprisonment for one year. By this law the jurisdiction of the Courts to determine what is a seditious matter is removed and vested in the Governor. There could be no greater instrument of oppression.

In West Africa the essential element of peace is the preservation of, and the non-interference by government with, the native institutions of the country. It is remarkable how flagrant abuse of this fundamental principle is gradually endangering the peace of the Gold Coast to such an alarming degree as would in the near future cause open revolts in several native States. Recent instances are the enforced enstoolment through Government influence of an undesirable candidate as the Paramount Ruler of the State of Lower Wassaw, and the Asamangkese Division Regulation Ordinance, 1935. The former relates to the open Government support of a small minority of sub-Chiefs in that State who had pledged themselves to accept the Sedition Ordinance, to place on the Paramount Stool a person not immediately connected with the reigning family, out of whom only an election could, in the Customary law, be made. The result of that illegal act was the deposition by the people of all those supporting Chiefs and the substitution in their places of eligible Rulers who would strictly conform to the custom and law. After an interval of a year Government have now despatched a large complement of soldiers who have escorted the several deposed Chiefs from their place of refuge to their respective divisions, and who after molesting and beating the

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people, and enjoying without payment their cattle and fowl and committing other atrocities, have removed by force the newly-elected Chiefs and physically restored the deposed Chiefs. So atrocious was the conduct of the troops that the Queen-Mother had to take refuge in one of the coast towns. The second instance relates to the passage in the Legislative Council of the law above referred to, by which for the ostensible reason of making provision for the control and regulation of the property, revenues and expenditure of the Stools of that Division, the Governor has been clothed with power to suspend or depose a Chief, and whenever in his own judgment alone it is considered necessary to order the Chief's removal from certain areas, and also his ultimate deportation.

This assumed power strikes at the root of the constitution of African States. According to that constitution the people alone are those in whom the sovereignty lies. They alone can create and depose a Chief. For more than half a century the Government of the Gold Coast have failed in their successive attempts to usurp this power of the people. It is certain, therefore, that this Ordinance which could be applied to other States on the flimsiest grounds considered necessary in the sole judgment of the Governor, is certain to disturb the peace of the country, create open revolts therein and endanger her economy. The National Peace Council should not concern itself only with the peace of Europe or the East or of South Africa, but also with the peace of all the integral parts of the Empire. It should therefore well inquire into the foregoing facts which in the near future will contribute to the detriment of the peace of that dependency.

The readers of this Magazine would be desirous of some authentic information as to the aims of our mission to London. Ours is a deputation of the Gold Coast Aborigines' Rights Protection Society, which is a federation of the natural Kings, Rulers and Chiefs of the Gold Coast, who in 1897 formed and established that Society for the mutual protection and constitutional conservation, so far as not inconsistent with a liberal regard for the march and advance of civilisation. In the year 1842 and again in 1865 resolutions were passed by a Select Committee of the House of Parliament to the effect that "Natives ought to be encouraged to exercise such qualities as might render it possible for the administration of the Governments to be transferred to them." But instead of the fulfilment of this promise there has been a grievous departure culminating in a complete reversal of the policy to the detriment and damage of the indigenous population and their natural Rulers. For instance, on the Executive Council where the Government policy is initiated there is not a single African representative. On the Legislative Council there are twenty European official and unofficial members as representing Government

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and the interests of only two thousand Europeans, but only nine Africans representing the whole indigenous population of more than three and a half millions. The result is that however inimical to the African interests a measure before the Council would be, it is passed as a matter of course by means of the overwhelming official majority. A " Labour Ordinance " is threatened by the Government. That law would introduce forced labour into the country and would invest political officers with power to exact forced labour.

With the limitation of space at my disposal I could only just add that in November last our delegation submitted a petition to the King in Council through the Secretary of State for the Colonies, which was rejected on the curt reply that the King had given directions that no action should be taken thereon. Dissatisfied with the answer we presented a petition to the House of Commons, which has since been referred by the Select Committee on Public Petitions to the Colonial Office with a recommendation to deal with it. The prayer of the petition was that the House of Commons might institute a full enquiry into :—

(*a*) The nature of the true relations between the British Crown from the year 1821 to the present time.

(*b*) The justice and desirability of the Gold Coast (Legislative Council) Order in Council of April 8, 1925, and its amending Orders in Council in the matter of the adequate representation of Africans in the Legislative Council of the Colony, and on the Executive Council of the Colony, to the end that true and honourable co-operation between them and the Government of the Gold Coast may be furthered.

(*c*) The whole of the history of the introduction and passing of the Native Administration Ordinance, 1927 (and its amendments) and into its provisions.

(*d*) Generally into the administration of the country and into other matters and disabilities affecting the indigenous population, such as the inadequate Education Ordinance and Rules thereunder. And such other matters as arise on the petition and seem to be proper and just subject matters for inquiry, including the circumstances of the introduction of the Criminal Code Amendment Ordinance and its provisions.

Appealing as I am, to Labour through this medium, it is earnestly to be hoped that all who read this article would extend the right hand of comradeship and help to the oppressed Africans of the Empire, and, in particular, to the present distressed Natives of the Gold Coast.

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FREDERICK ENGELS

By V. I. LENIN

Oh, what a lamp of reason ceased to burn,
What a heart had ceased to throb ?[1]

[*In view of the fortieth anniversary of the death of Frederick Engels on August 5th, the* LABOUR MONTHLY *has decided to reprint the following article written by Lenin in the autumn of* 1895. *This article appeared for the first time in English in a volume of writings by Lenin (now out of print but shortly to be reissued) entitled "Marx-Engels Marxism," published by Messrs Martin Lawrence, who have kindly given permission for it to be reprinted.*]

IN London, on August 5, 1895, Frederick Engels breathed his last. After his friend Karl Marx (who died in 1883), Engels was the most remarkable scientist and teacher of the modern proletariat in the whole civilised world. Ever since fate brought Karl Marx and Frederick Engels together, the lifework of both friends became their common cause. To understand, therefore, what Frederick Engels has done for the proletariat, one must clearly master the significance of the work and teaching of Marx in the development of the contemporary labour movement. Marx and Engels were the first to show that the working class with its demands was the necessary outcome of the modern economic order, which together with the bourgeoisie inevitably creates and organises the proletariat. They have shown that it is not the well-meaning attempts of some noble-minded individuals that will deliver humanity from the ills which now oppress it, but the class struggle of the organised proletariat. Marx and Engels, in their scientific works, were the first to explain that socialism is not the fancy of dreamers but the final aim and the inevitable result of the development of the productive forces of modern society. All recorded history up till now was the history of class struggles, the change of domination and the victory of one social class over another. And this will continue until the bases of the class struggle and class rule—private property and anarchic social production—have ceased to exist. The interests of the proletariat demand the overthrow of these bases, and therefore the conscious class struggle of the organised workers must be directed against them. And every class struggle is a political struggle.

These views of Marx and Engels have now been made their own by the whole proletariat fighting for its emancipation, but when the two friends in the 'forties took part in the socialist literature and social

[1]From a well-known verse by Nekrassov written on the death of the famous revolutionary publicist of the 'fifties and 'sixties, Dobrolubov.

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movements of their time, such opinions were something quite new. At that time there were many people—talented and mediocre, honest and dishonest—who, carried away by the struggle for political freedom and the struggle against the autocracy of kings, police and priests, did not see the antagonism of interests between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat. These people did not even admit the idea of the workers coming forward as an independent social force. There were, on the other hand, many dreamers, some of them men of genius, who thought that it was but necessary to convince the rulers and governing classes of the injustice of the modern social order, and it would then be easy to establish peace on earth and general well-being. They dreamt of a socialism without struggle. Finally, almost all the socialists of that day and the friends of the working class generally considered the proletariat only an *ulcer* and observed with horror how, with the growth of industry, this ulcer was growing too. All of them, therefore, contemplated how to stop the development of industry together with the proletariat, how to stop the "wheel of history." Contrary to the general fear of the growth of the proletariat, Marx and Engels placed all their hopes on its continuous growth. The greater the number of proletarians, the greater will be their power as a revolutionary class, and the nearer and more possible the coming of socialism. In a few words, the services rendered by Marx and Engels to the working class may be expressed thus: they taught the working class to know itself and become class conscious and they substituted science for dreaming.

This is why the name and life of Engels should be known to every worker. This is why we must give in this volume (the aim of which is, as in all our publications, to awaken class consciousness in the Russian workers) an outline of the life and activity of Frederick Engels, one of the two great teachers of the modern proletariat.

Engels was born in 1820 in Barmen, in the Rhine province of the Prussian kingdom. His father was a manufacturer. In 1838, Engels was forced by family circumstances to enter one of the Bremen commercial houses as a salesman, before completing his course at the *gymnasium*. His commercial occupation did not prevent Engels from working on his scientific and political education. While still at the *gymnasium* he came to hate autocracy and the arbitrariness of officials. His studies of philosophy led him further. The teaching of Hegel dominated German philosophy at that time, and Engels became his disciple. Although Hegel himself was an admirer of the autocratic Prussian state, in whose service he was occupying the post of professor in the Berlin University, the *teaching* of Hegel was revolutionary. The faith of Hegel in human reason and its rights, and the fundamental proposition of the Hegelian philosophy that a constant process of change and development is going

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on in the universe, had led those of the students of the Berlin philosopher who did not desire to reconcile themselves with the actual state of things, to the idea that the struggle with the actual state of things, the struggle with the existing wrong and ruling evil, is equally rooted in the universal law of eternal development. If all things develop, if one set of institutions is replaced by others, then why should the autocracy of the Prussian king or the Russian tsar—or the enrichment of an insignificant minority, or the domination of the bourgeoisie over the people—continue for ever ?

The philosophy of Hegel spoke of the development of the mind and ideas ; it was *idealistic*. From the development of the mind it deduced the development of nature, man, human and social relations. Marx and Engels, while maintaining Hegel's idea of the eternal process of development,[1] rejected the preconceived idealistic outlook. Turning to life, they saw that it is not the development of mind that explains the development of nature, but on the contrary, mind must be explained from nature, from matter. . . . Contrary to Hegel and other Hegelians, Marx and Engels were materialists. Casting a materialistic glance at the universe and humanity, they perceived that just as material causes lay at the basis of all phenomena of nature, so also the development of human society was conditioned by the development of material productive forces. The relations in which men stand to each other in the production of things necessary for the satisfaction of their human needs depend upon the development of the productive forces. And it is in these relations that the explanation is to be found of all the phenomena of social life, human aspirations, ideas and laws.

The development of productive forces creates social relations based upon private property, but now we see that the same development of the productive forces deprives the majority of their property and concentrates it in the hands of an insignificant minority. It destroys property, the basis of the modern social order ; this development itself tends towards the very aim which the socialists put before themselves. The socialists need but understand which of the social forces is, by its position in modern society, interested in the realisation of socialism and imbue this force with a consciousness of its interests and historical tasks. The proletariat is that force. Engels made his acquaintance with the proletariat in England, in the centre of British industry, in Manchester, whither he moved in 1842, entering into the service of a commercial house of which his father was a shareholder. Here, Engels did not merely sit in the factory office but walked about the slums in which the workers were cooped up and saw their poverty and misery with his own eyes. But he did not confine himself to personal observations. He read all that had

[1]Marx and Engels pointed out, many a time, that they, in their intellectual development, are very much indebted to the great German philosophers, particularly Hegel. " Without German philosophy," says Engels, " there would have been no scientific socialism."

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been discovered before him concerning the position of the British working class and made a careful study of all the official documents that were accessible to him. The fruit of his studies and observations was the book which appeared in 1845 : *The Condition of the Working Class in England.*

We have already mentioned above the chief service of Engels as the author of *The Condition of the Working Class in England.* There were many, even before Engels, who described the sufferings of the proletariat and showed the necessity of helping it. Engels was the *first* to say that the proletariat was *not merely* a suffering class, but that it was the shameful economic position in which the proletariat finds itself which inexorably drives it forward and forces it to fight for its final emancipation. And the fighting proletariat *will help itself by its own efforts.* The political movement of the working class will inevitably lead the workers to the consciousness that there is no way out for them except socialism. On the other hand, socialism will be a power only when it becomes the aim of the *political* struggle of the working *class.* Such are the main ideas of Engels' book *The Condition of the Working Class in England*, ideas, now owned by the entire thinking and fighting proletariat, but which at that time were quite new. These ideas were enunciated in a book, attractively written and full of the most authentic and terrible pictures of the distress of the British proletariat. That book was a terrible indictment of capitalism and the bourgeoisie. The impression created by it was very great. Engels' book began to be referred to everywhere as the best picture of the conditions of the modern proletariat. And, in fact, neither before nor since 1845 did there appear so striking and truthful a picture of the distress of the working class.

It was only in England that Engels became a socialist. In Manchester he entered into relations with the workers of the British labour movement and began to write for the English socialist publications. In 1844, on returning to Germany via Paris, he became acquainted in that city with Marx, with whom he had already previously entered into correspondence. In Paris, under the influence of the French Socialists and French life, Marx also became a Socialist. Here the friends jointly wrote a book entitled *The Holy Family, or a Criticism of Critical Criticism.* In this book which appeared a year before *The Condition of the Working Class in England* and of which the greater part was written by Marx, are laid the foundations of that revolutionary materialistic socialism, the chief ideas of which we expounded above. *The Holy Family* is a humorous nickname for the Bauer brothers, philosophers, and their disciples. These gentlemen preached criticism, which stands above any reality, above parties and politics, rejecting all practical activity, and only " critically " contemplates the surrounding world and the events which take place in it. The Messrs. Bauer judged the proletariat disdainfully as an uncritical mass. Marx and Engels decidedly attacked this absurd and harmful

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tendency. In the name of the worker—a real human personality, downtrodden by the ruling classes and the government—they called not for contemplation but for a struggle for a better order of society. They considered, of course, the proletariat as the power that is capable of waging such a struggle and that is interested in it. Even before the appearance of *The Holy Family*, Engels published in the *German-French Annuals* of Marx and Ruge, the *Critical Essay of Political Economy* in which he considered, from the point of view of socialism, the main phenomena of the modern economic order as the necessary consequence of the rule of private property. The intercourse with Engels undoubtedly contributed to the decision of Marx to make a study of political economy, the science in which his works produced a whole revolution.

Engels lived in Brussels and Paris from 1845 to 1847, combining scientific pursuits with practical work among the German workers in Brussels and Paris. Here Marx and Engels came into contact with the secret German "Communist League," which commissioned them to expound the main principles of socialism elaborated by them. This is how the famous *Manifesto of the Communist Party* of Marx and Engels, printed in 1848, originated. This little booklet is worth a whole number of volumes: its spirit gives life to the movement of the entire organised and fighting proletariat of the civilised world.

The revolution of 1848, which first of all broke out in France and then spread to other countries in Western Europe, brought Marx and Engels back to their native land. Here, in Rhenish Prussia, they found themselves at the head of the democratic *Neue Rheinische Zeitung* which was published in Cologne. The two friends were the soul of all the revolutionary democratic aspirations in Rhenish Prussia. They defended to the utmost the interests of the people and of freedom, against the reactionary forces. The latter, as is known, gained the upper hand. The *Neue Rheinische Zeitung* was suppressed. Marx, who during his emigrant life lost his rights as a Prussian subject, was banished, while Engels took part in the people's armed uprising, fought for liberty in three battles, and after the defeat of the rebels escaped to London via Switzerland.

Marx also settled down in that city. Engels soon after became once more a clerk and afterwards a shareholder of the commercial house in Manchester in which he had worked in the 'forties. Up to 1870 he lived in Manchester while Marx lived in London, which did not, however, prevent them from maintaining a most lively intellectual intercourse: they corresponded almost daily. The two friends exchanged their views and knowledge in this correspondence and continued, in collaboration, to elaborate scientific socialism. In 1870, Engels moved to London and their common spiritual life, full of strenuous labour, was continued till 1883, the year when Marx died. Its fruit was, on the part of Marx,

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Capital, the greatest work on political economy of our age, and on the part of Engels—a whole number of large and small works. Marx worked on an analysis of the complicated phenomena of capitalist economy. Engels, in works written in a very easy and frequently polemic style, elucidated the more general scientific questions and various events of the past and present, in the spirit of the materialist conception of history and the economic theories of Marx. Of these works of Engels, we will mention: a polemical work against Dühring (here are analysed the most important questions in the domain of philosophy, natural science and social science),[1] *The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State* (translated into Russian, published in St. Petersburg, 1895), *Ludwig Feuerbach* (Russian translation with notes by Plekhanov, Geneva, 1892), an article on the foreign policy of the Russian government (translated into Russian in the Geneva *Social-Democrat*, Nos. 1 and 2), some remarkable articles on the housing question, and finally, two small but very valuable articles on the economic development of Russia (*Frederick Engels on Russia*, translated into Russian by Vera Zasulich, Geneva, 1894). Marx died before completing his great work, *Capital*. However, there was a rough draft, and Engels, after the death of his friend, undertook the heavy labour of working up and publishing the second and third volumes of *Capital*. In 1885 he published Volume II and in 1894 Volume III. (He did not succeed in working up Volume IV.) A great deal of work was required on these two volumes. The Austrian Social-Democrat Adler rightly remarked that by the publication of Volume II and III of *Capital* Engels erected in memory of the genius that had been his friend, a majestic monument on which he without intending it indelibly carved his own name. These two volumes of *Capital* are, indeed, the work of both Marx and Engels. Ancient legends tell of various touching examples of friendship. The European proletariat may say that its science was created by two scholars and fighters, whose relations surpass all the most touching tales of the ancients concerning human friendships. Engels always—and, on the whole, justly so—placed himself behind Marx. "With Marx," he wrote to an old friend, "I always played second fiddle." His love for Marx when the latter was alive, and his reverence for Marx's memory after the latter's death, were infinite. This stern fighter and strict thinker possessed a deeply loving soul.

After the movement of 1848-49, Marx and Engels, in exile, were not occupied with science alone. Marx in 1864 formed the International Workingmen's Association and led it during the course of a whole decade. Engels too took an active part in its affairs. The work of the International Association, which, according to the idea of Marx, united the proletarians

[1] This is a wonderfully rich and instructive book. Unfortunately only a small portion of it is translated into Russian, containing an historical outline of the development of socialism—*Socialism, Utopian and Scientific*.

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of all countries, was of tremendous significance for the development of the labour movement. The unifying rôle of Marx and Engels continued even after the International Association came to an end in the 'seventies. Moreover, it may be said that their importance as spiritual leaders of the labour movement was constantly increasing in so far as the movement itself was growing incessantly. After the death of Marx, Engels alone continued to remain the counsellor and leader of the European socialists. His advice and directions were sought both by the German socialists (who, despite government persecution, rapidly and uninterruptedly increased in numbers) and the representatives of backward countries, such as Spaniards, Rumanians, and Russians, who had to think out and weigh their first steps. All of them drew upon the rich treasure of knowledge and experience of old Engels.

Marx and Engels, both of whom knew the Russian language and read Russian books, took a lively interest in Russia, followed with sympathy the Russian revolutionary movement and maintained connections with Russian revolutionaries. Both of them were *democrats* before they became socialists, and the democratic feeling of *hatred* towards political despotism was strongly developed in them. This direct political feeling together with a profound theoretical understanding of the connection between political despotism and economic oppression, as well as their rich experience of life, made Marx and Engels uncommonly responsive, particularly in regard to *politics*. Therefore, the heroic struggle of a small handful of Russian revolutionaries with the mighty tsarist government found the most sympathetic echo in the hearts of these tried revolutionaries. The inclination on the contrary, of turning, for the sake of supposed economic advantages, from the immediate and important task of Russian socialists—the winning of political freedom—naturally appeared in their eyes as suspicious and was even considered by them a betrayal of the great cause of the social revolution. " The emancipation of the proletariat must be the work of the proletariat itself "—this is what Marx and Engels constantly taught. But in order that it may fight for its economic emancipation, the proletariat must win for itself certain *political* rights. Besides this, Marx and Engels clearly saw that a political revolution in Russia would be of tremendous importance also for the labour movement in Western Europe. Autocratic Russia was always a bulwark of the entire European reaction. The uncommonly favourable international position in which Russia was placed by the war of 1870, which for a long time put Germany and France at loggerheads, only increased, of course, the importance of autocratic Russia as a reactionary force. Only a free Russia that requires the oppression of neither the Poles, Finns, Germans, Armenians nor that of other small peoples, and does not need the constant incitement of France against Germany—only a free Russia will enable modern Europe to breathe a sigh of relief from the military burdens, will weaken all the

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reactionary elements in Europe and increase the power of the European working class. This is why Engels, for the sake also of the success of the labour movement in the West, ardently desired the establishment of political freedom in Russia. By his death, the Russian revolutionaries have lost their best friend.

Eternal memory to Fred Engels, the great champion and teacher of the proletariat !

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ENGELS AND SCIENCE

By J. D. BERNAL

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IF Engels had not been the constant companion in arms of Marx in the revolutionary struggles of the 19th century, there is no doubt that he would be remembered chiefly as one of the foremost scientist-philosophers of the century. It was an ironical tribute paid to the correctness of his views as to the relations between politics and ideology that he suffered complete neglect from the scientists of the Victorian age. But time now has taken its revenge, and Engels' contemporary views on 19th century science seem to us now in the 20th far more fresh and filled with understanding than those of the professional philosophers of science of his day, who for the most part are completely forgotten, while the few that linger on, such as Lange and Herbert Spencer, are only quoted as examples of the limitations of their times.

Engels as a Scientist

It is often said by those anti-Marxists who never trouble to read the original writings that the scientific knowledge of Marx and Engels was superficial ; that Engels, for instance, sought in later life for scientific justification for the dialectical laws that Marx had introduced into economics. This is a complete misreading of the facts. Engels' interest in and knowledge of science was deep and early. It ran through all his philosophical and political studies. In an essay as early as 1843 (quoted in the Marx-Engels : Selected Correspondence, p. 33), he shows a grasp of the fundamental connection between science and productivity that was to run through all his later work :—

> . . . . yet there still remains a third factor—which never counts for anything with the economists, it is true—namely science, and the advance of science is as limitless and at least as rapid as that of population. How much of the progress of agriculture in this century is due to chemistry alone, and indeed to two men alone—Sir Humphrey Davy and Justus Liebig ? But science multiplies itself at least as much as population : population increases in relation to the number of the last generation ; science advances in relation to the total amount of knowledge bequeathed to it by the last generation, and therefore under the most ordinary conditions in geometrical progression too—and what is impossible for science ?

Engels to the very end of his life not only made use of the science he had learnt at the University, but kept up with extraordinary keenness and understanding his interest in the scientific discoveries of his times. Far from being prejudiced by any preconceived theories, he was more

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open to accepting new ideas than were the professional scientists. In a letter to Marx in 1858, he shows himself prepared to accept beforehand the idea of transformation of species which Darwin was to publish in the next year (Marx-Engels : Correspondence, p. 114). In one passage he almost hints at the idea of evolution, derived from the Hegelian idea of transformation of quantity into quality :—

> So much is certain ; comparative physiology gives one a withering contempt for the idealistic exaltation of man over the other animals. At every step one bumps up against the most complete uniformity of structure with the rest of the mammals, and in its main features this uniformity extends to all vertebrates and even—less clearly—to insects, crustaceans, earthworms, etc. The Hegelian business of the qualitative leap in the quantitative series is also very fine here.

A few months later, when Darwin's " Origin of Species " appeared, Engels and Marx together acclaim it as putting an end to teleology in the natural sciences. (Marx-Engels : Correspondence, Letter 49.) If we contrast this attitude to that of the official philosopher of science and physicist, Whewell, a great derider of Hegel, who was at the same time urging that Darwin's book should not be accepted by Trinity College Library, we can measure the greater breadth and penetration which their philosophical outlook had given to Marx and Engels. It was the same with all the significant ideas which science was developing. The great physical and chemical advances of the century, particularly the conservation of energy and the development of organic chemistry, were also recognised and carefully studied by Marx and Engels. In his approach to science, Engels cannot be said to have been an amateur. In Manchester, where he spent most of his life, there was a very lively scientific life with which he freely mixed, and, in particular, he had as his intimate friend Karl Schorlemmer, the first Communist Fellow of the Royal Society, and one of the most distinguished chemists of his time.

The Dialectical Approach to Science.

From the start Engels was able to unify his conceptions of science in such a way that he could naturally assimilate new developments as they appeared, and that without any of the wilder flights of such scientific philosophers as Haeckel or Herbert Spencer, but in an extremely sane and balanced way. The secret of this power lies in the materialist dialectic which he used in his analysis of the results of science. It was from Hegel that he learnt to appreciate, not things, but processes, and he always looked at the position which science had reached at any time in relation to its historical background. This is clearly seen in his essay on Feuerbach, where he traces the history of materialist philosophy in relation to the development of science and productive methods. For instance, on p. 33 of *Feuerbach* he says :—

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> But during this long period from Descartes to Hegel and from Hobbes to Feuerbach, the philosophers were by no means impelled, as they thought they were, solely by the force of pure reason. On the contrary. What really pushed them forward was the powerful and ever more rapidly onrushing progress of natural science and industry. Among the materialists this was plain on the surface, but the idealist systems also filled themselves more and more with a materialist content and attempted pantheistically to reconcile the antithesis between mind and matter. Thus, ultimately, the Hegelian system represents merely a materialism idealistically turned upside down in method and content. . . . (p. 36). The materialism of this last century was predominantly mechanical, because at that time, of all natural sciences, mechanics and indeed only the mechanics of solid bodies—celestial and terrestial—in short, the mechanics of gravity, had come to any definite close. Chemistry at that time existed only in its infantile, phlogistic form. Biology still lay in swaddling clothes ; vegetable and animal organisms had been only roughly examined and were explained as the result of purely mechanical causes. As the animal was to Descartes, so was man a machine to the materialists of the eighteenth century. This exclusive application of the standards of mechanics to processes of a chemical and organic nature—in which processes, it is true, the laws of mechanics are also valid, but are pushed into the background by other and higher laws—constitutes a specific but at that time inevitable limitation of classical French materialism.
>
> The second specific limitation of this materialism lay in its inability to comprehend the universe as a process—as matter developing in an historical process. This was in accordance with the level of the natural science of that time, and with the metaphysical, *i.e.*, anti-dialectical manner of philosophising connected with it. Nature, it was known, was in constant motion. But according to the ideas of that time, this motion turned eternally in a circle and therefore never moved from the spot ; it produced the same results over and over again.

Engels' concept of nature was always as a whole and as a process. He escaped the specialisation which even in those days made it impossible for a physicist to understand biology or vice-versa, and he laid down a general outline of this process which can still be the basis for an appreciation of the results of scientific research. The whole concept is expressed in its clearest form in the *Anti-Dühring* or gathered together in *Socialism, Utopian and Scientific.*

The Transformation of Quantity into Quality

The *Anti-Dühring* contains the clearest statement of the application and illustration of dialectical materialism in connection with natural processes. With particular care Engels deals with two of the main principles of dialectical method, the so-called change of quality into quantity, and the negation of the negation. Philosophers still cavil at the use of the phrase " transformation of quantity into quality " on the grounds that it is not quantity that changes into quality, because the quantity remains in the end. But the phrase is simply a shorthand way

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of referring to Hegel's law that purely quantitative changes turn into qualitative changes. It was in this form that Marx understood it, as shown explicitly in his letter to Engels (Letter 97). The examples which Engels gives, the case of ice turning into water, or water into steam, and that of the change of physical quality of a chemical substance with the number of atoms that are comprised in it, should have shown sufficiently clearly what this concept meant. The problem of qualities had always raised the greatest difficulties to the philosophers and furnished, as it still furnishes, a reason for invoking outside forces. From any logical materialist standpoint it is necessary to recognise that a new quality of a system is something not in any sense added to the system, but produced simply by a continuous change in its already existing components. To make his meaning perfectly clear, Engels cites as his final authority Napoleon (*Anti-Dühring*, p. 146) :—

> In conclusion we shall call one more witness for the transformation of quantity into quality, namely—Napoleon. He makes the following reference to the fights between the French cavalry, who were bad riders but disciplined, and the Mamelukes, who were undoubtedly the best horsemen of their time for single combat, but lacked discipline : " Two Mamelukes were undoubtedly more than a match for three Frenchmen ; 300 Frenchmen could generally beat 300 Mamelukes, and 1,000 Frenchmen invariably defeated 1,500 Mamelukes."

Understood in this way, the concept of the transformation of quantity into quality can be, and is being, extremely valuable in scientific thought. We are learning more and more that specific qualitative properties of bodies depend on the *number* of certain of their internal components. If an atom can only link with *one* other atom, the result is a gas. If it can link with *two* or *three*, the result will be a solid of fibrous or platy character. If with *four*, a hard crystalline solid like diamond. If with *more than four*, a metal. Similarly the processes of freezing, boiling, vitrification, etc., depend on what are now known as " co-operative " phenomena. It takes a million or more molecules to make a substance which can be recognised as a solid or liquid : a smaller number leads to the qualitatively different colloid state.

The Negation of the Negation

It is the same with the principle of the negation of the negation, which Engels illustrates with the famous examples of the barley seed negating itself into a plant and the plant further negating itself into many seeds, as well as the mathematical examples of the product of negative quantities and the differential calculus. These are the kind of statements that until recently made dialectical materialism seem quite unacceptable, indeed incomprehensible to scientists trained along official lines. Negation has always seemed to them something only applicable to human statements, but this is just a defect of language. If we had a better word to describe

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the transformation of something in the course of its own inner development into something different from itself, and later, its re-transformation into something more like itself again, that word would take the place of negation. And if Hegel's and Engels' works had been treated on their merits instead of as something to be attacked in every possible way, the sense of their use of " negation of negation " would have been clearly apparent. But this, of course, would also have meant the recognition of the necessity of revolution, and that was far too uncomfortable to be accepted.

Just as the transformation of quantity to quality, so the principle of the negation of negation finds many examples in modern science. In almost every physical process in nature, there is a tendency for the process itself to create an opposition which ultimately brings it to a stop, which in turn results in the disappearance of the antagonistic process and the re-establishment of the original one. Take, for example, the case of the building up of mountain ranges due to strain in the earth's crust. This results in increased weathering which destroys the mountain range and accumulates sediments which lead to further crust strains, leading to further mountain building, etc. From modern physics which is full of dialectical contradictions of this type, to Freudian psychology, where instincts and their repressions act in dialectical opposition, the whole of modern science is unconsciously affording more and more examples of the value of this aspect of phenomena.

The Dialectical Process of Nature as a Whole

But Engels did not confine himself to scientific illustrations of the validity of his philosophical position. His main task was a constructive one, and he gives in several places both in his Letters, in the *Anti-Dühring*, and the essay on Feuerbach, his general view of the dialectical process of nature taken as a whole. (See particularly Letter 232 and Chapters 5 to 8 of *Anti-Dühring*.) In the omitted fragment from Feuerbach (p. 76 of the English edition) he recapitulates the chief points in which the science of his time had served to lay the basis of a comprehensible materialistic view of the development of the universe. In this he lays stress on three discoveries of decisive importance :—

> The first was the proof of the transformation of energy obtained from the discovery of the mechanical equivalent of heat (by Robert Mayer, Joule and Colding). All the innumerable operative causes in nature, which until then had led a mysterious inexplicable existence as so-called " forces "—mechanical force, heat, radiation (light and radiant heat), electricity, magnetism, the force of chemical combination and dissociation —are now proved to be special forms, modes of existence of one and the same energy, *i.e.*, motion. . . . The unity of all motion in nature is no longer a philosophical assertion but a fact of natural science.

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> The second—chronologically earlier—discovery was that of the organic cell by Schwann and Schleiden—of the cell as the unit, out of the multiplication and differentiation of which all organisms, except the very lowest, arise and develop. With this discovery, the investigation of the organic, living products of nature—comparative anatomy and physiology, as well as embryology—was for the first time put upon a firm foundation. The mystery was removed from the origin, growth and structure of organisms. The hitherto incomprehensible miracle resolved itself into a process taking place according to a law essentially identical for all multi-cellular organisms.
>
> But an essential gap still remained. If all multi-cellular organisms—plants as well as animals, including man—grow from a single cell according to the law of cell-division, whence, then, comes the infinite variety of these organisms? This question was answered by the third great discovery, the theory of evolution, which was first presented in connected form and substantiated by Darwin. . . . .
>
> With these three great discoveries, the main processes of nature are explained and traced back to natural causes. Only one thing remains to be done here: to explain the origin of life from inorganic nature. At the present stage of science, that means nothing else than the preparation of albuminous bodies from inorganic materials. Chemistry is approaching ever closer to this task. It is still a long way from it. But when we reflect that it was only in 1828 that the first organic body, urea, was prepared by Wöhler from inorganic materials and that innumerable so-called compounds are now artificially prepared without any organic substances, we shall not be inclined to bid chemistry halt before the production of albumen. Up to now, chemistry has been able to prepare any organic substance, the composition of which is accurately known. As soon as the composition of albuminous bodies shall have become known, it will be possible to proceed to the production of live albumen. But that chemistry should achieve overnight what nature herself even under very favourable circumstances could succeed in doing on a few planets after millions of years—would be to demand a miracle.
>
> The materialist conception of nature, therefore, stands to-day on very different and firmer foundations than in the last century.

The quotation shows amply that not only had Engels a complete grasp of the essential stages of development up to the human level, but that he also saw very clearly the gaps in the explanation—the primary gap at the beginning where, particularly in *Anti-Dühring*, he decisively combats the creationist ideas still so common in physical circles, and the almost equally important gap at the origin of life. But at the same time he indicates the means by which these gaps can be filled, and the progress of the last sixty years has shown hereto an enormous advance. These gaps are not bridged yet, but they are visibly narrowing. The next gap which Engels recognised was that the development of human society from the animal stage, but it was not sufficient on this point to see and appreciate at their true value the results of scientific workers: here Engels was a scientist on his own account. The prevalent popular view in the 19th century was still that of the special creation of man. The materialists,

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led by Darwin, Huxley and Haeckel, maintained that man was only a superior ape distinguished by a larger brain. This brain which gave man his peculiar character was just such a product of evolution as a bat's wings or an elephant's trunk. Engels and Marx saw that this crude explanation was hardly better than the theological one. They saw, long before anthropologists had taken up the question, that there was something qualitatively different about man which distinguished him from other animals, and that this was not an immortal soul, but the fact that man does not exist apart from society, and is in fact a product of the society which he has himself produced. Men, by entering into productive relations with each other, by the first exchange of food, and by the transmission of social characters through the family, became qualitatively different from other animals. These subjects were dealt with by Engels in an essay on "Work as the factor making for the transformation of Apes into Men," and in his most brilliant scientific work, *The History of the Family*. It is here that the full value of Engels as a scientist can be appreciated. Long before its recognition by the official anthropologists, he appreciated the significance of the matrilinear family group or clan that travellers and missionaries were showing to exist among all primitive peoples. With his wide historical learning he linked these facts with the history of early Greece and Rome, and showed first of all what an admirable economic unit the matrilinear family was at a certain primitive stage of production, and secondly how it broke down first to the patriarchal family, and finally to the modern small family, under the influence of the development of property, itself due to better methods of production. All the more recent work of anthropologists and historians has only served to confirm Engels' orginal ideas. The transformation from the matrilinear family to the present form has been traced also in China and can be seen in actual course of operation in all primitive societies on contact with European civilisation, as Malinowski in particular has shown in great detail. Engels' anthropological studies were not merely academic exercises: they were closely related to the great task that he shared with Marx, the transformation of capitalist into socialist society. In recognising the relatively happy, courteous, and upright life of savages compared to their civilised descendants, he conceives the task of socialism as that of the return, again through the negation of the negation, to the nobility of the savage, without the sacrifice of the material powers which capitalist development had presented to mankind. His historical studies, particularly the history of the Mark, all led to the effecting of this transformation. He realised its difficulty (Letter 227):—

> History is about the most cruel of all goddesses, and she leads her triumphal car over heaps of corpses, not only in war, but also in "peaceful" economic development. And we men and women are unfortunately so stupid that we never can pluck up courage to a real progress unless urged to it by sufferings that seem almost out of proportion.

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Engels' Work and the Development of Science

What is the relation of Engels' work to the enormous development of science that has gone on since his time? What has already been said should be sufficient to show that this has only confirmed the value of his methods of approach and suggested their further application. For part of the intervening period this has been done by Lenin in *Materialism and Empirio-Criticism*, or by the writings of Plekhanov and Bukharin. At the moment this work is being carried forward both theoretically and practically by the younger Soviet scientists. There is no doubt that Engels would have recognised and welcomed the main advances which have occurred since his time. He would have recognised that four significant steps have been taken. The Relativity theory has finally dethroned the mechanical materialism of the Newtonian school, but only in its mechanical and not its materialist aspects. Engels, who welcomed the principle of the conversion of one form of energy into another, would equally have welcomed the principle of the transformation of matter into energy. Motion as the mode of existence of matter would here acquire its final proof. The second great advance, the whole modern atomic and quantum theory, would also appear to him as a vindication of dialectical materialism. The diverse qualities of the natural elements now find their explanation simply in the number of electrons which compose them. Even more clearly than in organic chemistry, the transformation of quantity into quality is exemplified. The great advances in biochemistry which show the phenomena of living animals and plants as a function of the properties of the chemical molecules which make them up is a direct exemplification of what Engels had written about the chemical basis of life. Finally, the discovery of the mechanism of inheritance through the chromosome theory (originally put forward by Mendel and now actually verifiable by microscopical observation) provides the material mode of transformation by which living animals develop and reproduce. These advances leave the main gaps in our knowledge still open, but we see more clearly than Engels could how they are likely to be filled. Nevertheless, Engels' work remains not only notable in its own time, but as valuable to us now in trying to keep the same all-embracing and historical approach to science that he possessed, and to use the methods he elaborated in pushing forward the solution of further problems. In doing this the scientist of to-day will make the memorial to Engels which is most in keeping with his spirit. For Engels was more than a scientist and a philosopher; he was a revolutionary. With him science acquired a new and positive meaning. As the last thesis on Feuerbach has it:—

"The philosophers have only interpreted the world in various ways. The point, however, is to change it."

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BOOK REVIEW

ENGELS' "HOUSING QUESTION."

The Housing Question. Frederick Engels. (Martin Lawrence.) 103 pp. 2s. 6d.

FOR many years, the British Working Class Movement has been denied the benefit of this classic of Marxism. It is best known here, perhaps, by reason of the copious quotations from it included in Lenin's *State and Revolution.* These alone should indicate how much this work will enrich our revolutionary theory.

The "Housing Question" is a collection of three articles, written by Engels for the *Leipzig Volkstaat* in 1872; and, it is a polemic against the followers of Proudhon, and one Dr. Sax, a typical representative of bourgeois reform. In the Preface to the second German edition, published in 1887 and imprinted in the present volume, Engels says: "Bourgeois and petty bourgeois socialism is strongly represented in Germany down to this very hour; on the one hand by professional socialists and philanthropists of all sorts with whom the wish to turn the workers into owners of their dwellings still plays a great rôle and against whom, therefore, my work is still appropriate; and on the other hand, in the Social Democratic Party itself . . . a certain petit-bourgeois socialism finds a voice" (p. 10-11).

For precisely the same reason Engels' work is still appropriate in Britain, sixty-three years after its first publication, and we shall find need to use this new, sharp weapon immediately in the months leading up to the General Election.

What better evidence could there be of the correctness and applicability of Engels' statement "that the housing shortage . . . . is a necessary product of the bourgeois social order; that it cannot fail to be present in a society in which great masses of workers are exclusively dependent on wages . . . . in which . . . . there exists a large reserve army of unemployed . . . . therefore there must always be tenants for the most infamous pigsties" (p. 46-47) than the fact that after these many decades all capitalist parties are preparing their nostrums upon this question.

Housing will play a considerable part in Baldwin's promise to "Rebuild Britain"; Lloyd George pledges "Reconstruction" and, no doubt, "more homes fit for heroes"; and the Labour Party cries "Up with the Houses and Down with the Slums."

And so at every stage of capitalism there have arisen these "solutions": the slums were to be abolished, overcrowding done away with, and so on. But the profit motive of capitalism has prevented any real solution of the problem and all the tampering of the reformers has done no more than create a slum problem in the plural.

Engels shows this very well by recalling (p. 75-76) certain passages of his "Condition of the Working Class in 1844"; relating to a terrible slum area of Manchester, known as "Little Ireland." On the site of this dismal slum the Manchester bourgeoisie built a railway station, voting themselves a pat on the back for their "humanitarianism." A "misfortune" in the form of extensive floods in 1872 revealed that "Little Ireland" still lived; that it had merely transferred from the southern to the northern side of Oxford

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Road. A visit to that part of Manchester to-day would show the same foul and filthy conditions of housing as when Engels wrote his immemorable work. The same thing is happening now with nearly every Slum Clearance Scheme. Slums are pulled down, but new houses are not erected, or if they are provided, the workers from the slum areas often cannot pay the high rent. Even allowing for the lower rents charged for those tenants moved from slum areas, they are still very much higher than they are accustomed to pay.

Engels' exposure of the reactionary equalitarian principles of Proudhon and of bourgeois socialism, whose essence is " to want to maintain the basis of all the evils of present-day society and at the same time want to abolish the evils themselves " (p. 46), might have been directed at leading circles of the Labour Party.

Engels not only shows that the demand for " giving every man his home " was a retrograde demand of the petit-bourgeois, Proudhon, for whom " the whole industrial revolution . . . . steam power and large-scale factory production is a highly repugnant occurrence " (p. 29), but, where the British capitalists had supplied houses, they had thereby added an extra thong, binding the workers to slavery.

Showing how the " mobility of labour power enhanced its bargaining power," Engels indicates this fact as one of the main reasons why the British capitalists provided the workers with " hutches." Having pinnioned the worker, these " philanthropists " exacted from him, not only the wealth created, but robbed him of his rights and privileges. In an interesting footnote (p. 57), Engels tells us how 2,000 miners living in company houses had been deprived of their right to vote.

It is well known that in many mine-fields at the present time certain companies provide houses. The employer-landlord is in a very advantageous position for increasing the exploitation of the workers. The " blessing " of a roof above his head becomes, in fact, a curse which binds the worker to one place and one master. This, true of Engels' period, is doubly true at the present time, when the " hearth and home " are taken into account by the authorities when they assess for the Means Test.

Engels shows, however (and it is equally true to-day), that the question of buying a house is of no direct interest to the great mass of the workers, who are paid by capitalism week by week just sufficient to buy the means of existence. The landlord cheats the worker, as does every shopkeeper. But it is in the factory while in the process of creating surplus value that the worker is exploited ; for this surplus value finally distributes itself among the whole capitalist class, providing the basis for rent, interest and profit.

Time and again Engels elucidates the process of creation of surplus value by labour power and its distribution amongst the various sections of the capitalist class in order to destroy the argument of the Proudhonists that loans free of interest would solve the housing question and other " social evils."

Similar views were expressed at the Southport Conference of the Labour Party, when certain delegates demanded, as part of the " Up with the Houses Scheme," finance, by means of supplying credits free of interest through a State Banking System. To be sure, Dr. Dalton rebuked them, because such a proposal would have embarrassed the people in the " money " circles, and would have made it a trifle difficult for the (according to him) future Labour Government. It is worth quoting Engels at length in order that fallacious notions spread in the Labour Party may be corrected.

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"The interest on loaned money capital is only a part of profit; profit, whether on industrial or commercial capital, is only a part of the surplus value taken by the capitalist class from the working class in the form of unpaid labour. The economic laws which govern the rate of interest are as independent of those which govern the rate of surplus value as could possibly be the case between laws of one and the same social form. But as far as the distribution of this surplus value among the individual capitalists is concerned, it is clear that for those industrialists and business men who have large quantities of capital in their businesses advanced by other capitalists, the rate of their profit must rise—all other things being equal—to the same extent as the rate of interest falls. The reduction and final abolition of interest would therefore . . . . do no more than re-arrange the distribution among the individual capitalists of the unpaid surplus value taken from the working class; it would not, therefore, give an advantage to the worker as against the industrial capitalist, but to the industrial capitalist as against the *rentier*. . . . . The class of *rentiers* would no longer have any inducement to loan out their capital in the form of advances, but would invest it industrially themselves or in joint stock companies on their own account. The mass of surplus value extracted from the working class by the capitalist class would remain the same; only its distribution would be altered, and even that not much" (p. 37-38).

In the long run the workers' wages would be reduced in proportion to his gain on the lower rent. He would, as it were, pay the employer his rent, instead of paying it the landlord. And this, says Engels, "applies to all so-called social reforms. Either they become general and then they are followed by a corresponding reduction of wages, or they remain quite isolated experiments . . . ." (p. 52).

In a deep and interesting passage (p. 54) Engels says that the solution of the Housing question can only come about when society has been sufficiently developed towards overcoming the antithesis of town and country, which is "the kernel of the problem." This will be achieved in the process of the revolution. Led by the proletariat, the peasantry will sweep away all the "reactionary ideas which would bind them to a small plot of land and a hut, the unity of town and village against capitalist exploitation will solve, not only the Housing question but every social problem. "Its realisation is seen to be the transformation of all the small rural house-owners into industrial domestic workers; the destruction of the old isolation and with it the destruction of the political insignificance of the small peasants who would be dragged into the 'social whirlpool'; the extension of the industrial revolution over the rural areas and thus the transformation of the most stable and conservative class of the population into a revolutionary hot-bed" (p. 17-18).

This prognostication, developed and carried into life by Lenin and the Bolsheviks is being proved to-day in the U.S.S.R. Whilst capitalism continues its Rake's Progress and whole cities become vile slums, the Moscow Soviet announces a plan for re-building in Moscow on a scale which could not be contemplated in the capitalist world.

As will be seen, the "Housing Question" is by no means limited to that matter. It is a model of how any problem should be treated by applying basic principles of Marxism. Its passages on the State are especially illuminating.

E. REGAN.

[*A reply by John Strachey to Emile Burns' reveiw of his book, "The Nature of the Capitalist Crisis," together with other Book Reviews, etc., unavoidably held over, will be included in next month's issue.*]

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The Lancashire Labour Monthly Conference

THE Lancashire Conference of the Labour Monthly against War and Fascism, held on July 13 in the Caxton Hall, Salford, was packed out with delegates representative, both of almost every type of working-class organisation in Lancashire, and also of a great number of its principal centres such as (in addition to Manchester), Liverpool, Stockport, St. Helens, Wigan, Warrington, Nelson, Colne, Oldham, Bury, Heywood, Rochdale, Blackburn, Bolton, Preston, etc., etc., as well as of the neighbouring towns in Cheshire such as Birkenhead, Altrincham and Runcorn. Below is given a classified table showing the representation. In addition to the delegates there were some 18 visitors.

	No. of organisations.	No. of delegates.
Trades Councils or Trades and Labour Councils ..	4	11
Labour Party Organisations	7	15
Trade Union Bodies (from 19 trade unions, including one District Committee)	34	71
Co-operative Organisations (1 Education Committee, 1 Co-operative Party Division, 9 Guilds, 1 Comrades' Circle)	12	26
Independent Labour Party	12	22
Communist Party and Young Communist League ..	29	48
Independent Socialist Party	3	6
Friends of the Soviet Union	6	14
Anti-War and Anti-Fascist Organisations	12	24
Other Labour, Socialist and Student Bodies ..	10	15
	129	252

The Conference was noticeable, in the first place, for the unhesitating and eager manner in which delegates got down to the discussion of all aspects of the issues of war and fascism and, in particular, of their effects on the cotton industry. Eighteen speakers took part in the discussion after John Strachey and W. Whittaker had led off as principal speakers. The second most noticeable feature of the Conference was the practically unanimous expression of hostility from all the delegates who spoke towards the gas drill and blackout schemes of the National Government, and the need for uniting all sections of the movement for a struggle against them. In view of the situation this aspect of the fight against war and fascism was most stressed though it was pointed out in the discussion that the fight against Mosley was equally a part of the fight against war, as was the fight against the open war preparations, or, indeed, as were the struggles of the cotton workers against the new attacks of their employers.

A splendid indication of the effect the Conference has had, at any rate in one of the organisations represented, is provided by a letter which the LABOUR MONTHLY has received from one of the delegates of a trade union branch in an important chemical town of Lancashire. He writes to say that after he gave his report his co-delegate who is the chairman of the branch stated that

> When he was elected to go to the Conference he thought he was going to a conference of hot heads and was prejudiced before he got there, but instead of going into a conference of hotheads he walked into a room that was like an oven and sat for four hours to listen to the most brilliant, coolest-headed speeches he had ever heard in his lifetime of various conferences he had attended.

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The LABOUR MONTHLY makes mention of this report as it believes that while many delegates may have justifiable criticisms of one aspect or another of its conferences, this letter appears nevertheless to provide justification for the organisation of these conferences in order to provide working-class organisations with a free and open platform for the discussion of the issues of war and fascism and so enable the movement to become clarified on how best to advance the struggle.

REPORT OF CONFERENCE.

Councillor Frankland of the Clayton Labour Party, in opening the Conference from the chair, drew attention to the fact that conferences like these were long overdue in Lancashire. Our aim, he said, is to get together all those who are interested in the questions of war and fascism, freed from the trammels that at present restrict so many of them. We must follow the example of South Wales where they showed what could be done by concerted effort, in forming a United Front. Abroad the workers of Paris by their united front action have so far stopped Fascism from coming to France. He considered that the incentive to Fascism already existed here ; for the National Government was encouraging war-mindedness in directions not to be thought of two years ago. They support German rearmament and consequently are enabled to demand more war preparations here. They support Japan even though that country bombed British owned mills in Shanghai and then forced China to accept their products with a resultant loss of markets to British goods in China, and a big reduction in Lancashire trade and an increase in its unemployment. We are told that all this is inevitable by the National Government. It was necessary to get all parties to form a United Front against fascism and war, and to erect a barrier against the National Government and its war policy.

John Strachey pointed out how there had been a great intensification of the war danger in the past year ; the present open schooling of the whole nation for war showed that what had hitherto been denied by our opponents was true, namely, that under capitalism a new war was inevitable. If we had established some kind of united front in this country as they had done in France, he claimed that by this time the British Government would have been prevented from supporting Hitler and would have been driven, as the French Government had been, into supporting the peace policy of the Soviet Union.

The earlier efforts this year of the British workers which had forced the National Government to reverse its policy on the relief scales had recently been stifled, he pointed out, by the statements of Citrine and Morrison, for instance by the latter's instruction to local Labour parties to support the Government's gas drill schemes. Apart from the fact that any such " defence " measures are as good as useless against attack, cannot we realise, he said, that once we take this step, once we allow labour organisations—the Labour Party, the Co-operative Party—to become a part of the Government machine for waging war, both defensive and offensive, we have gone right away from the possibility of making the waging of war impossible. After pointing, amid loud cheers, to the courageous stand of the Nelson Labour Party against taking part in the Jubilee celebrations, which were nothing but a piece of imperialist propaganda, he pointed out that the first step in opposition to war needed courage, but if we do not oppose from the start then we shall be simply carried along by the National Government.

W. Whittaker, of the Twisters and Drawers' Association and an E.C. member of the Nelson and Colne Divisional Labour Party, described in detail present conditions in the cotton industry : how 25 per cent. were unemployed, how many received a lower wage for a full week's work than the relief payment ; how he knew of women who, in case any worker might be off sick, have stood outside the gates from 7 a.m. onwards from day to day for three months on end without getting one day's work. He maintained that with the new agreement the majority were in for reductions. Referring to the Dyers' negotiations, he said that if they put in for an increase there would be strong support for them throughout Lancashire. Many employers were evading the rates under the agreement ; for example, one method was to give the worker two pay envelopes, one of which contained a certain percentage which he was encouraged to give back. If he didn't he would soon find himself sacked. He said he was against a proposal coming before the Nelson Weavers that they should leave the Weavers Amalgamation. While this might be an expression of

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militancy it was as dangerous as the tendency of many workers to leave the unions on the grounds that there was nothing in the union for them. We are not going to gain anything by splitting the movement in this manner. There was a need for a 100 per cent. trade union membership to fight the employers' attacks. Referring to the plan of the T.U.C. for socialisation, he pointed out how it provided for a committee of experts, who were not associated with the industry, to manage it. This would weaken the unions and was in no way socialist as was claimed for it. For socialism is when the factories and mills are run by the workers and for the workers. He put forward several proposals such as (*a*) to stand against the employers' attempt to evade the agreement and lengthen hours, (*b*) for revising the agreement to eliminate wage cuts, (*c*) against Mosley and his Fascists, (*d*) against the scrapping of spindles, (*e*) strengthen the unions and for the adoption of a militant policy. He said Mosley would have some success if this latter was not done ; the workers must be organised to drive Mosley out of Lancashire.

G. Burgess (Stockport Trades Council and Labour Party) who was the first speaker in the discussion, drew the attention of the meeting to the large number of local Labour Parties who had already sent in resolutions to the next Labour Party Conference utterly condemning the Government's air drill and opposing the decisions of the previous Party Conference on War.

In reply to a delegate from the Independent Socialist Party who asked whether anything was being done to prevent the Left parties from being branded with the stigma of failing to protect their women and children, Strachey replied that the only effective protection was the carrying through of a fight right along the line against fascism and war.

Then followed a vigorous speech from Labour **Councillor J. Young** of the Manchester City Council, which was continually and loudly applauded. He declared that during the last war he *was* an anti-gas instructor and demonstrator, but that *now* he would refuse to take part in gas drill. "To hell with your precautionary measures," he declared. "The Labour Movement was getting too damned respectable. We say that we must all act together to protect our women and children not with these 'precautionary measures' which are not defensive at all, but by preventing the war breaking out. We must deal with the cause—war—not the effect—gas drill."

After several further delegates had spoken and had made several suggestions for inclusion in the resolutions to be passed by the Conference and after a young technical college student had expressed the opinion that all workers in chemical and munition factories should come out on strike, **Comrade P. Martin,** one of the delegates from the St. Helens branch of the Municipal and General Workers' Union, gave some important details as to gas manufacture in St. Helens. He described how some gas had been sent down to Surrey and there had been tried out on some soldiers, some of whom had been driven thereby into a lunatic asylum. Miners had been expelled from cottages bordering on a gas factory as they could see into the works. There was an atmosphere of secrecy and conspiracy, and the workers were afraid to talk of what was done in the factory.

After **Comrade S. A. Segar,** a member of the N.U.R. and delegate from the Birkenhead Friends of the Soviet Union, had proposed that the Conference should reaffirm its belief in the General Strike as a weapon against war, **Mrs. Darbyshire,** a delegate from Woodlands, Gorton Co-operative Women's Guild, urged that the Conference should pass a similar resolution pledging the delegates to refuse to take part in war or preparations for war, as was unanimously passed by the 2,000 delegates to the Women's Co-operative Guild Annual Conference at Birmingham, so that they could take it back to their organisations and so get them similarly pledged.

Lester Hutchinson, one of the ex-Meerut prisoners, pointed out how the capitalists were putting the cause of the crisis in the cotton industry on to Japanese competition in India which Lancashire could not fight owing to the Japanese workers' low wages ; this was used to bring down the English workers' wages and at the same time by the same capitalists to lower Indian standards. Fascism was sometimes spoken of as a foreign product ; this might lead to a slogan of a war against Fascism which would also have the effect of turning people's thoughts away from the fascist menace at home.

After a delegate from the Nelson Anti-War group had described the support they had from 30 organisations in Nelson, including the Weavers and the Labour Party, and were seeking to take steps to reverse the war decisions of the Labour Party and the T.U.C., **Comrade E. Beesley** (Manchester Anti-War Council, Gorton group), described how as a member of the I.L.P. and T. & G.W.U., and though a delegate to the Gorton Trades and Labour Council, this latter organisation had barred him from speaking against fascism or for the united front in trade union branches.

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After a delegate from the Liverpool I.L.P. Federation had asserted that the social revolution as necessarily bound up with the question of war, fascism, etc., had not been mentioned, the last speaker, **Comrade W. Rust** (Manchester District Committee, Communist Party), declared that the Conference was there to discuss how far men and women can find common ground for action against the immediate danger of war. If we succeed in doing that, he said, we shall be taking a bigger step towards working class rule in this country than by any amount of revolutionary phrases. There had been a tendency to speak of the United Front as if it was some magic talisman. We must see that the United Front was brought forward on the basis of finding concrete issues on which people could work together. Perhaps there had not been sufficient arguments and proposals for action against Mosley ; the fight against Mosley is an essential part of the fight against war. In support of this Rust quoted proof from the *Blackshirt* itself for June 28 as follows, which boasted that squadrons of the type of the war converted De Haviland Comet " based on Berlin and working in close co-operation with our German friends, could fly to Moscow and discharge a respectable cargo of bombs and return to Berlin."

The Standing Orders Committee of five, which had been elected at the beginning of the Conference, then brought forward the resolutions which are given below and which were slightly added to by the Conference. As stated above, they were carried unanimously except for one dissentient voice on the last one. The Conference then concluded after a few closing remarks by Comrade Strachey and the Chairman.

RESOLUTIONS.

1. This Conference calls for the release of Thaelmann, Rakocsi and all other Anti-Fascist prisoners. (Passed unanimously.)

2. All delegates at this Conference pledge themselves to return to their organisations and agitate for the support of the demonstration organised by the Anti-War Council to Platt Fields on July 28, and the Anti-War Demonstration of the Manchester Borough Labour Party and the Manchester and Salford Trades Council on August 4.* (Passed unanimously.)

3. This Conference suggests that the delegates should raise in their organisations the demand, to be supported by the Trades Union Congress and Labour Party, that the British Government should request the German Government to allow a workers' delegation to go to Germany with complete liberty to visit all concentration camps, prisons and factories, etc. in order to report on the present conditions of the German working class, and so strengthen the bonds of solidarity between the British and German workers. (Passed unanimously.)

4. This Conference declares that only united action by the working class movement can defeat the twin dangers of war and fascism, and it suggests that all the labour, co-operative and trade union organisations of Lancashire should seriously discuss how this unity can be achieved. It hails the recent achievements of the French working class in forming the broadest possible united front against fascism and war, and declares that this achievement is an example and inspiration to the British workers.

This Conference believes that the most urgent issue of the day is the fight against the National Government and its preparation for war. Believing modern wars are a direct product of the capitalist system, and that peace is possible under socialism alone, this Conference declares that a realistic anti-war policy must be based on firm resistance to all capitalist governments. Such resistance can only be made effective by united opposition to such measures of war preparations as blackouts, gas-mask drills, air displays etc., etc., and that this resistance must include the utilisation of every form of opposition to war, including the general strike.

This Conference calls on all opponents of Fascism, regardless of all other political differences, to unite against the attempt of Mosley to make Lancashire the base of his British Union of Fascists.

This Conference also pledges itself to assist in the strengthening of the cotton trade unions, and calls on all workers to rally to the help of the dyers in their struggle for increased wages, and to assist the hard-pressed cotton operatives in their resistance to the spindle scrapping scheme and their struggle to prevent any further reductions in their already low standards. The Conference declares however, that the only solution of the chronic crisis in textiles is not " reorganisation " along the lines of a " Cotton Board," but the achievement of working-class ownership and control and the freeing of India so that production could be carried on to meet the needs of the people. (Carried with one dissentient.)

*Since the Conference was held consultations took place between the Manchester Borough Labour Party and the Manchester and Salford Trades Council as the result of which it was decided to make the meeting on July 28 the occasion of a united demonstration against war and war preparations.

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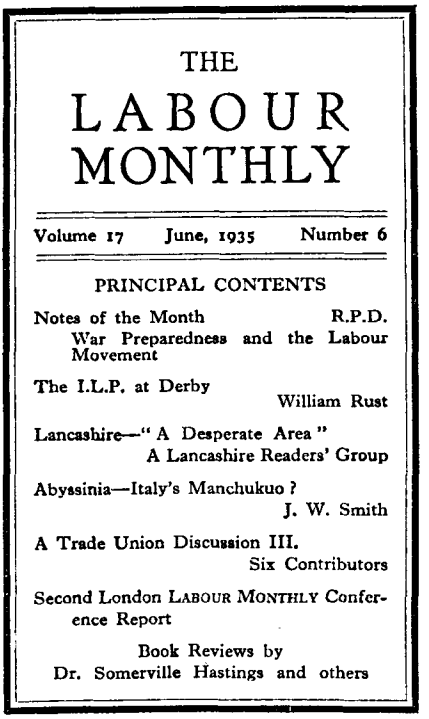
AN EXAMPLE TO FOLLOW.

HERE is an example for all readers to follow in their organisations. After the last London Conference of the Labour Monthly, all the delegates present were written to asking them to recommend to their organisations to take a number of copies of the LABOUR MONTHLY, in which the report of the Conference was inserted (that is to say the June issue) on sale or return. One branch of the Woodworkers' in London ordered a supply and at the next meeting of the branch eleven copies were sold; They have decided to take eight regularly in the future, and this in spite of the fact that the opinion had been previously expressed by some members that it would be difficult to sell a magazine at 6d. in their branch.

Why Not a Friendly Competition?

If this can be done by a branch with under seventy members, why not start in your own organisation a friendly competition and get your Secretary to write in immediately for a number of copies of the LABOUR MONTHLY on sale or return at 4½d. a copy (stating if a poster is required giving the main feature in each month's issue). This August issue, with the conclusion of the trade union discussion and the preliminary survey given is surely a good number to start with. Keep the MONTHLY posted how you get on, so that the progress of the competition can be recorded.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